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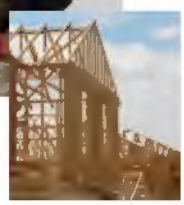

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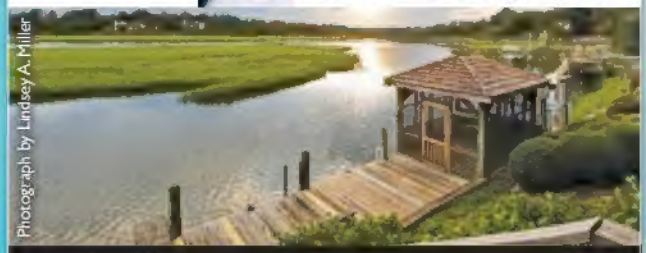

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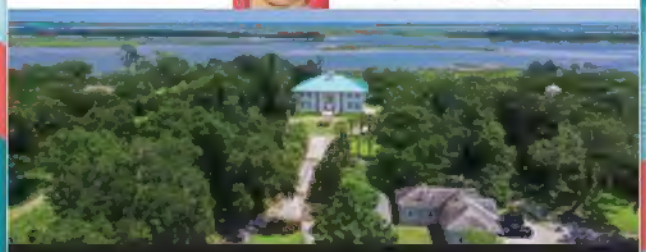

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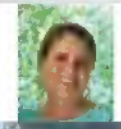

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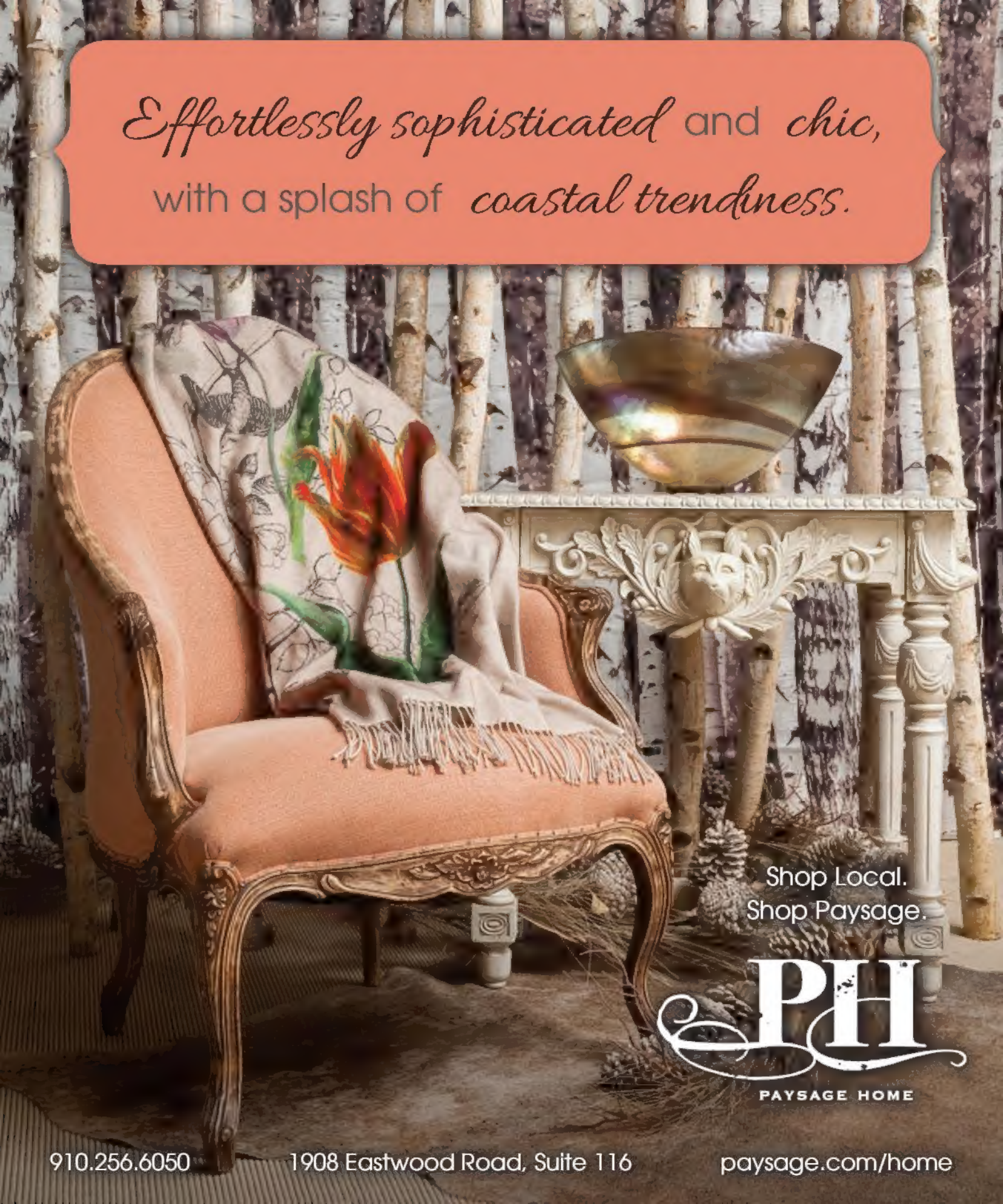
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Saving George

An anchor of enchantment in the front yard

By Jim Dodson

His name is George. That's what we've taken to calling him, at any rate. George is old and bent, weathered by age. We think he might be pushing 100 years old.

I've known George most of my life. Grew up just two doors from down from where he lived but I never paid him much notice until recently.

That's because George is an old tree, *Crataegus phaenopyrum*, we think, based purely by his leaf pattern and bark. His common name is a Washington hawthorn — hence the nickname we've bestowed on him.

But here's where the sweet mystery deepens.

According to my tree identification book, Washington hawthorns are relatively small flowering trees — in some cases, shrubs — that produce early and abundant white flowers in the spring and vivid red berries that last into winter, a bounty for winter birds, especially cedar waxwings. They're also reportedly poisonous to dogs, which could be a problem, since Ajax, our shameless golden retriever, will eat anything put before him. On the other hand, he's one lazy brute, unlike his Greek namesake, and not much for climbing trees. So Ajax is probably safe.

We moved into the neighborhood just before Thanksgiving. On our first day in the Corry house, I stopped to admire George. He was magnificently arrayed with gold and crimson leaves, like *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. The neighborhood is famous for its old graceful hardwoods, many of them well over a century old. George is clearly one of the neighborhood patriarchs. That's why I paused to admire him the afternoon we moved in, suddenly remembering him from my childhood, making a mental note to free him from the tangle of English ivy vines that had grown around him like something from a fairy tale.

In a year of small wonders, it seemed wonderfully providential that we were moving into the Corry house, 100 feet from where I grew up. The Corry boys were my pals growing up. Their parents, Al and Mama Merle, were my parents' good friends. Big Al was one of Greensboro's leading builders, and the house he built for his wife and four kids — a gorgeous wooden bungalow with flowing rooms, parquet floors and host of innovative design touches — was one of the first houses built in Starmount Forest after the war.

For more than a year, my wife, Wendy, and I had quietly scouted houses throughout Greensboro. Then one Sunday after I heard the Corry house was for sale, we went for a look. I didn't let on that the Corry house was always my favorite in the neighborhood. But after she walked through it, on the drive home to the Sandhills, Wendy quietly announced, "I think that's the house. It just feels like us."

The Corry kids, all four of them, were thrilled to hear their homeplace was being purchased by a Dodson. Each quickly got in touch to offer their enthusiastic congratulations. The Corrys were the most self-sufficient clan I ever knew, natural builders and people full of life. Chris, the oldest boy, actually lived in a tepee with his bride as they built their own dream home west of Greensboro. The Corry boys hunted, fished and could build anything with their hands. They were also crazily musical, playing stringed instruments of every sort. In 1969, son Craig and I made the Greensboro Teenage Talent Show playing guitars and singing Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice." We called ourselves Alfred and James.

Big Al informed us that Alfred and James needed something "extra" to win. "You boys need a shtick to impress the judges," he said.

I asked him why we needed a stick on stage.

Big Al laughed. He hailed from Buffalo, New York. "That's a Yiddish word," he explained. "It means a comic gimmick, something to make people laugh. First rule of vaudeville — always leave 'em laughing."

He suggested that we add kazoos to the act. We thought that was the silliest thing we'd ever heard, but Mama Merle bought us a couple anyway.

The director of the show asked us to play a second song while the judges made up their minds. So we did an encore — with guitars and kazoos. The audience gave us a standing ovation. We wound up in third place. I still have the program. TV host Lee Kinard invited Alfred and James to come on his *Good Morning Show* at Christmas. We worked up a couple of Christmas carols and did the second one with kazoos. The shtick worked wonders.

Craig grew up to marry Marcy Madden, his first girlfriend from just down the block. He became a veterinarian. Britt, his little brother, was a musical prodigy who became a music teacher and recently signed on to direct the music for *Horn in the West*. Ginger, the oldest and only girl, became a lawyer.

Like his papa, Chris was a jack-of-all-trades, a born builder of almost anything. He now sports a full-grown gray beard and knows his late mama's house better than anyone alive because he built much of it with his father and took care of the place until Merle passed away a year or so ago. His wife, Fenna,

told me in an email that Mama Merle and Big Al would both be so happy that a Dodson kid had come home again to purchase their house. From faraway California, Ginger wrote that she hoped we would have many happy years living there.

Which brings me back to George.

A week after we got settled, we took ladders, handsaws and a hatchet and liberated George from those wretched English ivy vines. The job took two afternoons, but George looked considerably more at ease, maybe even grateful. My nephew came and helped me clean out the area around his base, where I'll soon plant Spanish bluebells and English daffodils for the spring.

I also planted six young trees, three Japanese maples I'd raised from sprouts and a trio of river birches like the three I planted once in Maine.

They stood in front of the post and beam house I built on a forested hilltop surrounded by birch and hemlock. The beams were rough-sawn Northern fir, with pegged heartwood pine flooring salvaged from a 200-year-old New Hampshire barn. On cold but sunny winter days, whenever the sun streaming through that house's large south-facing windows warmed the beams, you could hear gentle sighs and faint cracking sounds as the wood relaxed, expanded, exhaled.

That peaceful sound told me something I guess I've always known. That wood — trees — are something more than just fellow living and breathing organisms.

They are enchanted.

Maybe this explains why one of my first memories of life is of sitting on a low limb in a sprawling live oak next to our house by Greenfield Lake, in Wilmington, waiting for my father to come home from the newspaper where he worked. I was forever climbing trees, much to my mother's chagrin, and sometimes falling out of them. My dad liked to call me Mowgli, the orphaned boy from Kipling's *Jungle Book*, one of the first books I ever read on my own.

Come to think of it, the books I loved early on all seemed to have extraordinary trees in them — Greek and Roman mythology, the Tarzan books, almost every fairy tale I ever read contained forests that were either forbidden or simply enchanted, home to magic creatures, wizards, evil queens and noble woodsmen.

And why not? Plato and the ancient Greeks believed souls resided in sacred groves of trees, and the Buddha found enlightenment sitting beneath a fig. The Egyptian Book of the Dead mentions groves of sycamores where the departed find eternal bliss, and the Bible speaks of a Tree of Knowledge that altered paradise. The Irish word "druid" derives simply from a Celtic word for oak, while in India to this day people seeking miracles hang family rags on trees to make shrines to the gods. My Baptist grandmother always insisted that the dogwood tree with its perfect white petals and crimson heart was a symbol for Christ's resurrection, and showed me the old Appalachian story to prove it.

The Glastonbury thorn, holds English lore, is a hawthorn tree that is said to have sprouted miraculously from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he traveled to Britain after Jesus' crucifixion. The hawthorn blooms at Christmas, and the queen is traditionally brought one of its blooms with her tea on Christmas morning. In broader English lore, wherever hawthorns and oaks reside together, kindly fairies supposedly live as well.

I do hope that much holds true even if, come springtime, the old tree I liberated turns out to be something quite different.

There's an old saying that an optimist is someone who plants a tree he may never live long enough to sit under.

That's probably true for the six young trees I planted around George.

But come spring, home at last, I plan to sit under George when those bluebells and daffodils bloom.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.

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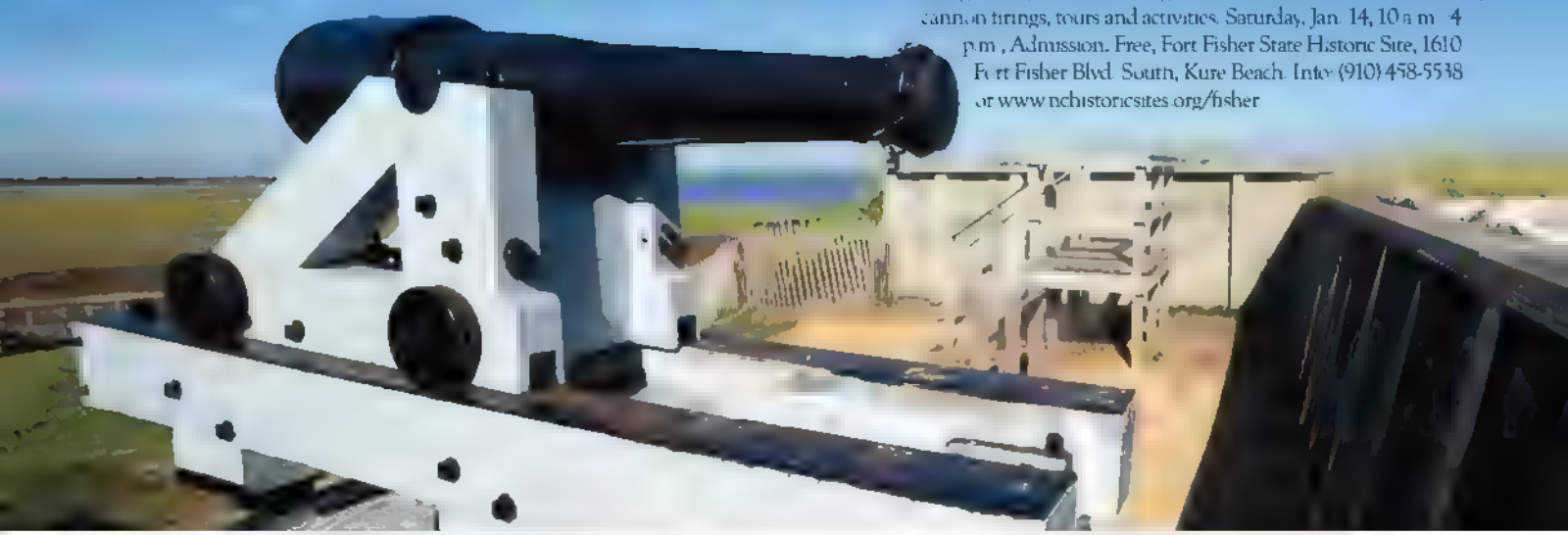

Polar Paddle

These are the Arctic people, polar people, flip-flops in January people taking part in the ninth annual Cold Stroke Classic by Coastal Urge. And while, yes, they are vertical on stand-up-paddle boards racing each other on long (7 mile) or short (3.5 mile) courses, it's impossible not to get, at least, a bit wet. Maybe you are one of these people (look down to see if you're wearing flip-flops) and want to race your fellows in on the Intracoastal Waterway, or maybe you are a spectator of this cold-weather species.

Either way, there is chilly fun to be had and cheerleading to do. Adult and kid race categories. Jan. 21, race begins at 10 a.m., Blockade Runner Resort, Wrightsville Beach. Registration: $50–75 (adults), $25 (kids). Register online at www.coldstrokeclassic.com or call (910) 256-7112.

Blue Note

In 1980 a local dermatologist and jazz lover, Dr. Harry VanVelsor, started the NC Jazz Festival; 37 years later the horns are still blowing and the ivories are still being tickled. Big names come; this year six-time-Grammy nominee Nnenna Freelon and her trio will open the festival on Thursday night. Billed as a traditional jazz festival, they do bend the rules for Sea Pans, a steel drum quartet inspired by the music of Trinidad. The festival takes place at the Hilton Riverside downtown and includes a Sunday morning "musical brunch" and a chance to jam with the festival's international artists. Feb. 2–4, 7:30 p.m.–midnight. Tickets: Thursday: $40, Friday and Saturday: $60, or Patron Packets: $200. Active military: $25/night, students: $15/night. Call (910) 793-1111 or visit www.ncjazzfestival.com.

I'd Like to Thank the Academy. . .

Besides sheer volume and enthusiasm, if there was any doubt about how serious Wilmington takes its theatre . . we have our own Tony Awards. In its sixth year, the Star News Media Theater Awards draw together the thespian community to laugh, cry, brag and showcase a revue of scenes and numbers from nominated plays and announce the winners in 22 different categories like "Best Play," "Best Actress in a Musical," "Original Production," etc. And because the stakes are high, the evening must be tempered by hilarious banter from the hosts, this year Heather Setzler and Jason Aycock. Thursday, Feb. 2, at 7:30 p.m., Thalian Hall. Tickets: $18. Call (910) 632-2285 or visit www.thalianhall.org

World of Dance

The old axiom "When it rains, it pours" rings true for many scenarios, including this winter's abundance of dance. It seems all over town, the opportunities abound.

Classic — It's unusual for a musical to make this list, but those who know *42nd Street* will understand. Two words: tap dance. The Broadway tour comes to town and those who want to "meet those dancing feet" should take note! Wednesday, Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: $46–95, CFCC's Wilson Center, 703 North Third St., Wilmington. Call (910) 362-7999 or visit www.capefearstage.com.

Complex — Sometimes dance can express complex themes and social commentary with ease, beauty and humor. Such is the case for Camile Brown and Dancers' performance "Mr. TOLE RAncE," a multimedia show combining live music, theater, comedy and animation to explore African-American humor, W.E.B. Dubois, idea of "double consciousness" of black performers and stereotypes of black culture throughout history. Thursday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: $15–40. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Call (910) 962-3500 or visit www.uncw.edu/presents.

Making Whoopi

A guaranteed (temporary) cure for your seasonal affective disorder is Cape Fear Theatre Arts production of the musical *Sister Act* based on the 1992 movie that starred Ms. Goldberg in her hey day. A musical mash-up of Motown and spirituals, the show follows Deloris, a nightclub singer, who goes into witness protection in a convent,where she ends up rejuvenating their struggling choir. And while this show won't have Whoopi, is does have Barbara Mootoo, a rising star visiting from NYC who shone in last year's production Memphis, also directed by Justin Smith. Local favorites will grace the stage in various nun or gangster apparel, accordingly. The show runs Dec. 30–Jan. 22, Thursday–Sunday. All shows 7:30 p.m., except for Sundays at 3 p.m. Thalian Hall. Tickets: $25–30. Call (910) 632-2285 or visit www.thalianhall.org.

Celtic — Enjoy traditional Irish dancing and music elevated to a dramatic stage show. *Riverdance* stops in our fair city for one night on its North American tour. In its 25th year of touring, *Riverdance* is a phenomenon of footwork. Thursday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: $35–75, CFCC's Wilson Center, 703 North Third St., Wilmington. Call (910) 362-7999 or visit www.capefearstage.com.

Catchy — Bollywood dance is an audiovisual feast of bouncing and jingling and colorful, mesmerizing costumes, it's impossible to not enjoy. *Taj Express: The Bollywood Musical Revue* is choreographed by Vaibhavi Merchant, a veteran of 75-plus Bollywood films. The production is straight from Mumbai, has 2000-plus costumes and, if that's not enough, there's romance. Tuesday, Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m.Tickets: $25–60. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Call (910) 962-3500 or visit www.uncw.edu/presents.

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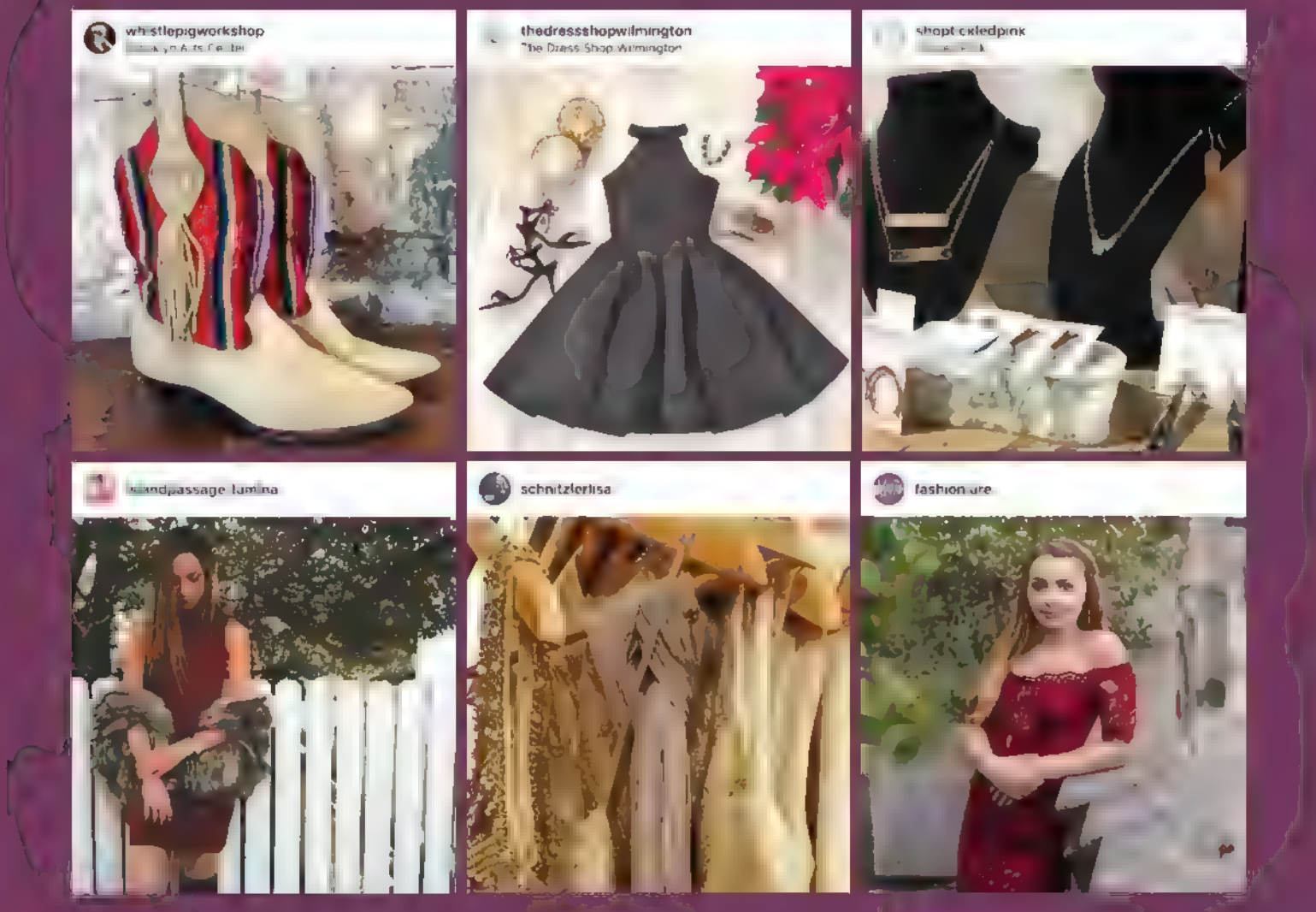
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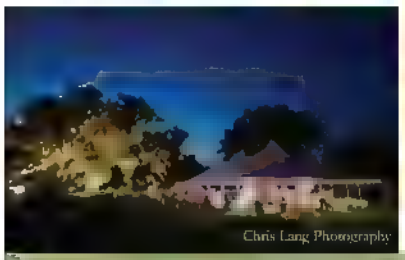

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Walking the African-American Heritage Trail

By Isabel Zermani

Walking downtown Wilmington, you can stumble upon historic house plaques and roadside markers with names you may or may not recognize. On their own, these tidbits elicit curiosity, but don't offer much context. Some sites may have never been marked. Others may have vanished. The story lines can seem unbound. But, with a guide to connect place-to-place, the tidbits talk to each other, giving life and understanding to our collective past.

"Marcus Garvey said a people without history is like a tree without roots," says Islah Speller, who created a foundation, mini-museum and black history walking tour to nurture those roots.

Speller begins her tour with her own Dutch Colonial home, the Burnett-Eaton House, 410 N. 7th St. Dr. Foster Burnett (1894–1945) ran a home clinic and founded the first local African-American hospital, Community Hospital (est. 1921) and nursing school across the street, at 415 N. 7th St. The James Walker Memorial Hospital permitted black patients but not black doctors. Speller shows photos of her home's former exam and X-ray rooms, even a nurse filling prescriptions in the pharmacy.

Dr. Hubert Eaton Sr. (1916-1991) married Dr. Burnett's daughter, Celeste. He became the hospital's chief and a resolute activist for equality. He successfully sued the Board of Education to force upgrades to then "separate but equal" schools. He compelled integration at Wilmington College (now UNCW), the county library and even the municipal golf course.

Walk one block south to the home of Dr. Leroy Upperman (1913-1996), 315 N. 7th St., the first resident at Community Hospital, who later joined the surgical staff of the integrated New Hanover Regional Medical Center. It opened in 1967, the closing day of the segregated hospitals. UNCW's Upperman African American Cultural Center is named in his honor.

Continue two blocks south to 713 Princess St., the home of Dr. James Francis Shober (1853-1889), North Carolina's first black doctor. The son of a slave, Dr. Shober graduated from Howard Medical School and moved to what was then the state's largest city to serve a black population of over 10,000 people. (Dr. Eaton wrote his biography.) Turn around and you'll face the Giblem Lodge (est. 1866) at 19 N. 8th St. Built by the Free and Accepted Prince Hall Masons, it was Wilmington's first black lodge in the heyday of lodges. Later, it doubled as the city's first black library.

Four blocks south and three east mark the site of New Community Hospital (est. 1939) next-door to Williston Senior High School (est. 1915), 401 S. 10th St., "the greatest school under the sun." All Williston alums are proud, but some are famous. Althea Gibson, the first black female Wimbledon champion, graduated from Williston while being mentored by Dr. Eaton, living at his nearby home, 1406 Orange St., with its regulation tennis courts.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was scheduled to speak at Williston on April 4, 1968, but extended his stay in Memphis. He was murdered that day. Protests at Williston would snowball into riots.

Schools integrated the next year, closing Williston (it later reopened as a middle school) in favor of New Hanover and Hoggard. The loss of these pillars — the hospital and school — left a spiritual and physical hole. Racial tensions between students boiled over, causing a mass boycott. Black students took refuge at Gregory Congregational United Church, 609 Nun St., to start their own school. Riots and arson spread citywide. Black protestors and white supremacist groups clashed. In February 1971, the firebombing of a white-owned store and gunshots fired at the responding firemen led to the arrests of eight black students, a white social worker, and the Rev. Ben Chavis. They would become internationally known as the Wilmington Ten, who were imprisoned for almost a decade before the charges were overturned. In 2012, they were officially pardoned by Gov. Beverly Perdue. A marker was erected in November on Nun St. Standing between it and Williston is a new pillar, a community center named for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 401 S. 8th St., shining like a beacon.

Speller's tour is comprehensive. Homes of black architects, builders, inventors, educators, as well as schools, businesses, churches and monuments — from slavery to 1898 to Jim Crow to the Civil Rights struggle — all within walking distance. The aim is simple. "Through the cobblestone streets of the city, we will learn of their indomitable spirit." And feel its presence stirring.

Info: African-American Heritage Trail Walking Tours by appointment. 60–90 minutes. Call (910) 769-4450 or email spellerislah@yahoo.com. Groups welcome. Or take a self-guided tour with the city's guide: http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/home/showdocument?id=16

Isabel Zermani, our senior editor, prefers the storied life.

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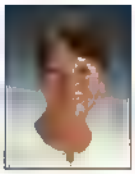
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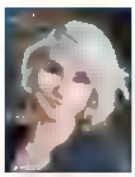
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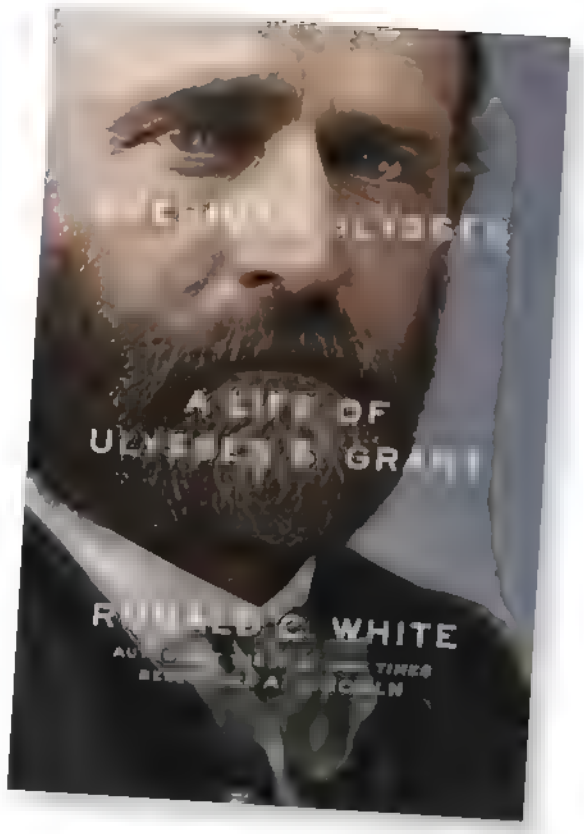
American Ulysses

Finding the uncommon in a common man



By Stephen E. Smith

We've grown infamous for what we should know but don't. What's more distressing is our proclivity for spouting "factoids," assumptions that are repeated so often they become accepted as truth. Ask a reasonably well-educated person what he or she knows about Ulysses S. Grant and you'll probably hear that Grant was a drunken Civil War general and a president whose administration was tainted by scandal. Beyond that, you're not likely to get much in the way of revelatory information.

Certainly we're suffering no dearth of sources. Curious readers have access to *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*—one of the finest memoirs written by an American—and recent biographies include Jean Edward Smith's 2002 *Grant* and H.W. Brands' 2013 *The Man Who Saved the Union*, lesser volumes which have done little to compensate for the general lack of knowledge regarding a man who rose in seven years from a clerk in a leather goods store to commander of all Union forces in the Civil War to a two-term president of the United States. As president, Grant may not be as obscure and maligned as James Buchanan or Andrew Johnson, but he has nonetheless slipped from memory, and most of what remains in our collective awareness are vague misconceptions and flawed characterizations.

With *American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, Ronald C. White offers new insights into the life of the 18th president of the United States. Whereas Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer William McFeely stated emphatically in his 2002 biography of Grant: "I am convinced that Ulysses Grant had no organic, artistic, or intellectual specialness," White finds much to admire, basing his observation on Grant's interior life, his intense love for his wife and children, his fondness for the theater and novels, and his loyalty to his friends, not a few of whom led him into the ill-conceived schemes that tarnished his second term as president. "I discovered that Grant's life story has so many surprising twists and turns, highs and lows, as to read like a suspense novel," White writes. "His nineteenth-century contemporaries knew his story well. They offered him not simply admiration but affection. In their eyes he stood with Washington and Lincoln."

Indeed, Grant was held in high regard by his countrymen—and by ordinary people around the world. But McFeely's critical judgment of Grant as an unexceptional man isn't without justification. White's account of Grant's early life reveals no hint of exceptionalism, and his years as a young Army officer and his subsequent sojourn as a hardscrabble farmer offered no indication that he'd rise to general of the Army of the United States, the first non-brevet officer to hold the rank since Washington. Moreover, his terms as president were marked by the best of intentions regarding Reconstruction, civil rights and Native American assimilation. By contemporary standards, dismal though they may be, Grant's presidential years were only vaguely tarnished by the misconduct of trusted associates.

Readers who believe themselves schooled in the facts of Grant's life will encounter the occasional surprise. Grant, the general who would destroy the Southern economy and social construct, was, for a brief period, a slave owner. White points out the general's views on "the peculiar institution" were pragmatic and demonstrate evolution of thought. In a letter to his abolitionist father, Grant wrote: "My inclination is to whip the rebellion into submission, preserving all constitutional rights. If it cannot be whipped in any other way than through a war against slavery, let it come to that legitimately." A year later he would write to Elihu Washburne, a Republican congressman from Illinois and Lincoln supporter: "I was never an Abolitionist, not even what could be called anti-slavery, but I try to judge fairly & honestly and it became patent to my mind early in the rebellion that the North & South could never live at peace with each other except as one nation, and that without slavery."

Other miscalculations would prove to be more damaging to Grant's wartime reputation, such as his General Order No. 11: "The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department . . are hereby expelled . . ." Although he claimed that a member of his staff had written the order, Grant was, according to White, solely responsible for an order that threatened to alienate the 7,000 Jews who served in the Union Army.

The most oft-repeated factoid regards Grant's alcohol consumption. (There's no hard evidence that Lincoln ever said that if he knew Grant's favorite brand of whiskey he'd send barrels of it to his other commanders.) White attributes rumors of Grant's intemperance to jealous fellow officers. "Few had ever met Grant—but no matter. Once the label 'drunkard' became affixed to a man in the army, it could seldom be completely erased." He also rejects the notion that Julia Grant was the "balm" for her husband's drinking, citing evidence to support the claim that Grant rarely over-imbibed.

Grant's Civil War successes, from Fort Donelson to Appomattox, are adequately reprised in White's narrative, and for hard-core Civil War enthusiasts there's a plethora of histories that cover Grant's military career in more

exhaustive detail. Where White's biography shines is in evaluating Grant's post-war conduct, falling decidedly on the side of Grant's defenders.

As president, Grant worked tirelessly for Native American assimilation and black civil rights. And he was temporarily successful in crushing the Ku Klux Klan, but was, in the long run, unsuccessful in changing attitudes that ruled the hearts and minds of Americans, especially Southerners. White also focuses on the Gold standard, the Annexation of Santo Domingo, the Virginius Affair, and the scandal surrounding the Gold Ring. Grant's second term was dominated by economic upheaval, and White's analysis of the Panic of 1873, precipitated by the failure of the brokerage house of Jay Cooke & Company to sell bonds issued by the Northern Pacific Railway, is thoroughly researched and placed in perspective.

Unfortunately, Grant's grasp of economics, on a personal level and as head of the federal government, was a weakness that plagued him into his old age when he was bankrupted by a smooth-talking swindler. But Grant always rallied when he found himself in difficult circumstances, and his finest achievement occurred when, suffering from incurable throat cancer, he transformed himself into a man of letters and wrote his two-volume personal memoir, restoring his family's fortune. After Grant's death, Julia received royalties amounting to $450,000 ($12 million in today's dollars).

The overriding value of White's biography is in deepening our knowledge of a controversial American leader and the machinations that shaped his presidency. Forget about the notion that history repeats itself. It doesn't. But an accurate understanding of the past is necessary to place the present in context. We have an obligation to possess more than a muddled, haphazard knowledge of the events that have shaped the moment.

Given the tenor of the times, White probably won't succeed in bringing "the enigmatic, inspiring, and complex story of *American Ulysses* . . . to the wider audience he deserves," but if McFeely's 2002 psychological appraisal of Grant leaves us with a decidedly negative impression—". . . he (Grant) had forced himself out of the world of ordinary people by the most murderous acts of will and had doomed himself to spend the rest of his life looking for approval for having done so"—White instills in the reader a sense of pride in the political system that nurtured a leader possessed of uncommon tenacity and persistent moral courage.

Stephen E. Smith is a retired professor and the author of seven books of poetry and prose. He's the recipient of the Poetry Northwest Young Poet's Prize, the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Prize for poetry, and four North Carolina Press awards.

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Food for Thought

Medical ethicist David Schultz dives into the Great American Sandwich at Detour Deli Café

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

Dr. David Schultz, an internist, began practicing in Wilmington in 2000. As a "hospitalist," he treats patients during their stays at New Hanover Regional Medical Center (NHRMC). By the time he arrived here, he had already practiced medicine extensively — including both as a resident at the renowned program at the University of California at San Francisco and as an internist here in North Carolina at Camp Lejeune. But still, three months into his tenure in Wilmington, he found himself with a case that stumped him.

David faced an ethical dilemma.

The hospital had admitted an elderly woman with advanced dementia. She was very, very sick, suffering from a perforated bowel — "a disaster in her belly," as David explains it. "She was slowly dying, and her condition before the perforation had been poor to begin with." The entire medical team saw the hopelessness of the situation, but the woman's family couldn't accept the prognosis. Whenever a doctor suggested that the condition was fatal, the woman's relatives responded, "Keep trying."

David, then, found himself pitting his medical judgment — which concluded that complicated interventions would not help this woman — against her family's understandable desire to save her life. "We're telling them, 'There's nothing we can do,'" he says, "but, from television, they think that doctors can do anything." Making matters even more difficult, the family knew little about medicine and didn't trust that hospital professionals cared about their loved one's life.

For 10 days, this state of affairs continued, with doctors trying to convince the family to offer palliative end-of-life care and the family insisting on heroic measures. Through antibiotics, the woman's condition seemed to improve temporarily, but as David explains, she wasn't getting better. "Medically, we can create a mirage where things stabilize, but it's not sustainable."

David eventually sought help from Dr. Marsha Fretwell, a geriatrician who, as chair of NHRMC's ethics committee, guided medical professionals, patients and families through the complicated non-medical dilemmas that sometimes accompany health crises. Fretwell sat down with the patient's family and said, "We always want to make things better, but this time we can't."

This particular case resolved itself dramatically. One afternoon, the patient's condition suddenly deteriorated. When the family continued asking for treatment, David, frustrated, became devastatingly honest. "I looked at the husband and said, 'Do you want to hurt your wife? The treatment you want would do nothing to help her, and she'll still die.'" The words shocked everyone in the room, and something suddenly shifted in David's relationship with the family. "Just hold her hand and be with her," David said gently, "because now

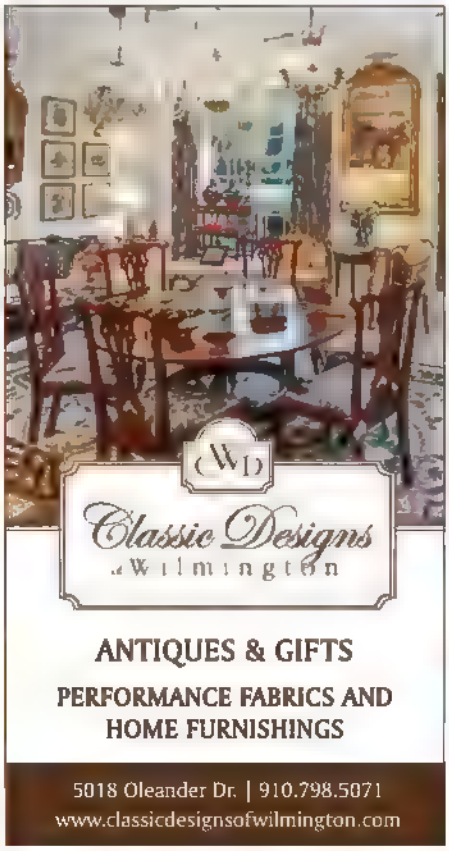
is her time." For the next 45 minutes, the family remained there together as the patient passed away. David, along with the intensive care doctor and the hospital's pastoral care specialist, stayed with them the entire time.

Fifteen years have passed since that day, and David has probably seen hundreds, if not thousands, of patients in that time, but this case stands out in his mind because it convinced him of the importance of honesty, trust and open communication in medical relationships. After the patient died, David joined the hospital's ethics committee, which includes physicians, nurses, pastoral care specialists and a professional ethicist. These days, he serves as its chair.

"From middle school on," David knew he wanted to be a doctor. He grew up in the Finger Lakes region of New York, a town called Skaneateles — "Just say, 'Skinny Atlas'" — and when he describes the ethnic neighborhoods of upstate New York cities, his eyes shine with culinary nostalgia. "An Italian bakery, with a crew of bakers sweating in front of century-old ovens, was just up the street. And then there were the Germans with their cold cuts." In that environment, David became a sandwich devotee, which helps explain his fondness for the hole-in-the-wall lunch spot Detour Deli Café. The place takes its name from the fact that its location, near the Brooklyn Arts Center, demands a bit of a detour from the center of downtown. For fun, all the sandwiches have connections to the 1945 noir thriller *Detour*. The Tom Neal — Neal played the unfortunate Al Roberts in the movie — layers turkey and fresh mozzarella on a crusty baguette smeared with pesto mayo and Sriracha sauce, giving the mild ingredients depths of flavor. The Martin M. Goldsmith (Goldsmith wrote the original novel as well as the screenplay) combines pastrami and Swiss with coleslaw, and remoulade sauce to create "a Reuben with a twist," says David. "I love the balance in these sandwiches. Vegetables have as big a part as the meat."

Detour Deli specializes in the Great American Sandwich. The Great American Canned Meat plays a role here, too. For a Vietnamese-style banh mi, teriyaki Spam

Gifts Galore



replaces the more traditional pâté. "I used to think of Spam as bad bologna, but it's good on here," David says, lifting a corner of the bread to find clues to the sandwich's unexpected success. "It's been cooked on a flat top or something. It's much better than pulled out of a can with mustard slathered on it."

Medicine has a famous maxim, "First, do no harm," but this idea, known as non-maleficence, is actually only the first of three dominant principles in medical ethics. The second, autonomy, stresses the value of patients making their own decisions. The third, beneficence, requires an answer to a simple question: "Will this therapy actually help?"

For the most part, David tells me, ethical dilemmas arise when two of these three principles clash. That happens most often over end-of-life issues, when a patient's or family's desires (autonomy) conflict with medical professionals' best judgment (beneficence and non-maleficence). "In these cases," David explains, "patients and families have unrealistic hopes. They want to prolong life at all costs." The structure of modern medicine can compound these tensions, because these days hospital patients see a succession of specialists, none of whom will get to know them very well. That "fragmentation of care," David says, "means that it can be difficult to develop trusting relationships, especially when things go wrong."

Several times a month, then, the ethics committee receives a call for support. Sometimes, team members meet with the parents of a baby born with unsurvivable birth defects. Sometimes, they guide patients and families toward Wilmington's "absolutely first rate" palliative care and hospice services, which didn't exist here when David first arrived. The goal lies in helping medical staff, patients and families communicate better during challenging situations. Once they establish trusting relationships, patients and their doctors can move forward, together.

Detour Deli Café is located at 510 Red Cross St. You can find out more by calling (910) 538-4093 or checking out the Detour Deli Cafe page on Facebook.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

Photo courtesy of Wilmington resident Jeffrey F. Holmes, named by audubon.org as one of "15 Awesome Instagram Accounts for Beautiful Bird Photos."

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JANUARY

"The Energetics & Psychology of Food"
Presented by Beth Mutcher, CHHC Elemental Wellness
Tuesday, January 17th, 2017 at 2 p.m.
You've probably heard the saying "you are what you eat" But have you ever wondered how food really works in your body? Could food actually have a "personality"? Why do we crave certain foods? Why do we eat, period? Let's answer all these questions and more! **RSVP by Monday, January 16th.**

"Art for a Positive Well-being" Art Series
Presented by Maureen McKenna, Artist & Instructor
Thursday, January 19th, 2017 at 2 p.m.
This series of 3 instructional painting classes is for anyone who wants to explore their hidden artistic talent and will be structured for the novice to follow along, and interesting for the intermediate skilled painter. Discover the three mediums of painting; watercolor in January, acrylic in February and oil in March. **RSVP by Friday, January 13th, Cost: $10 per class. Thursday, January 19th-Watercolor: A seascape on cold press watercolor paper. Thursday, February 16th-Acrylic: A still life on canvas. Thursday, March 16th-Oil: A sunset of blended colors on canvas.**

"Life Kinetik"
Presented by Jill Bean Davenport, RN, BSN, Certified Life Kinetic Trainer
Tuesday, January 31st, 2017 at 2 p.m.
"Be a better you" with Life Kinetik training. You will be able to experience a unique, mind/body exercise program demo opportunity. Life Kinetik is a fun way to stimulate your brain and improve your cognitive functions, and is designed for participants of any age. **RSVP by Monday, January 30th.**

FEBRUARY

"Sweetheart Brunch with Smooth Jazz & Gospel"
by Saxophonist, Daryl Murrill
Presented by Brightmore of Wilmington
Sunday, February 12th from 11:30-2:30 p.m.
Treat the loves in your life to a Valentines Brunch with Smooth Jazz and Gospel saxophonist Daryl Murrill. Mimosas and desserts will be served in Brightmores Parlor/Pub prior to and after your brunch seating. Complimentary mimosas, desserts and live music, courtesy of Brightmore. *Brunch: $15 Per Guest. Seatings are at 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM.* **RSVP by Wednesday, February 8th.**

"Art for a Positive Well-Being" Art Series
Presented by Maureen McKenna, Artist & Instructor
Thursday, February 16th at 2 p.m.
Join us for the 2nd in this series of 3 instructional painting classes for anyone who wants to explore their hidden artistic talent. These series are structured for the novice to follow along, and are interesting for the intermediate skilled painter. The series is a great opportunity to discover the 3 mediums of painting; watercolor, acrylic and oil in one course series! Our February session will offer the opportunity to paint a Still Life on canvas in Acrylic. **RSVP by Monday, February 13th.**

"Seated Night Yoga"
Presented by Wellness Staff of Brightmore Independent Living
Friday, February 24th at 7 p.m.
This seated night yoga consists of gentle stretches, soothing music and guided meditation to find your mind at ease and encourage your mind, body, and spirit to promote relaxation before your night sleep. **RSVP by Tuesday, February 21st.**

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Reconciling Resolutions

Forget dropping 20 pounds. Just be nice

By Susan Kelly

My father could be depended upon for two things. One, he always, always, had a ChapStick in his pocket. At church, on a car trip, watching TV — if you'd licked your lips raw, usually in January, he had ChapStick on him. And secondly, at every opportunity, every introduction, he'd say to me, "Shake his hand hard and look him in the eye."

Come January, you might as well look winter in the eye, too. He's not going anywhere anytime soon. If I were still the parent of a 12-year-old, I'd say, "Deal with it." As in:

"But the teacher hates me."

"Deal with it."

We're all adults here, and it just seems uncommonly unfair to have to deal with both winter *and* January resolutions. The thrill of a new year (Finally! Stash that tired 2016.) feels, well, compromised. We're slightly cowed, perhaps a bit weary, before we even get into it. What you call a resolution — finally finish *Moby Dick*, drop 20 pounds, no more Cheetos, ever — I call a grand catalyst for failure. This is why another grownup in my past advised "keep it private" regarding what I was giving up for Lent, another winter downer.

Still, the antidote to January blues, blahs and frostbite is to *do something*. When you're feeling small, start small. "When all else fails, clean," my mother has said to me. Let's rule that one out. Instead, haul in the empty trash-can of the single mom or stooped gentleman who lives a few houses down, when the trash-gobbling truck has thrown it carelessly sideways on the curb. Neighbors do this for my 86-year-old mother, which eases my mind that she won't lift up the lid and fall inside — a real possibility given the cavernous size of the city bins.

And go ahead. Let that guy in your lane. What's it gonna cost you, 20 seconds of travel time? Motion him over, wave in the rearview. We're Southerners with a reputation for manners and politeness, traits worth saving and using. The fellow making you crazy with constant braking is lost, and looking for a specific street. That was you in Charlotte, remember, frantically checking your GPS, and fully aware that someone behind you was also steaming with impatience.

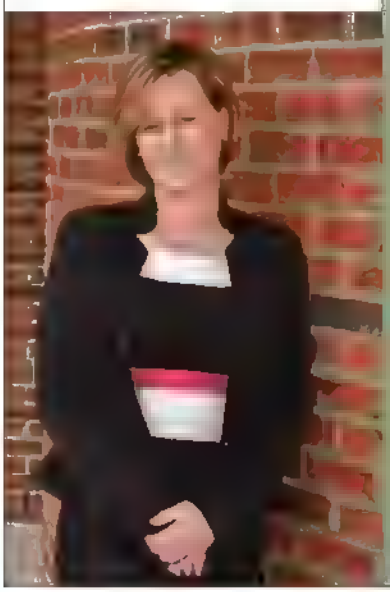
Before it snows or, more likely, ices, you're going to be making soup or something tomato-y and taco-y in the Crock-Pot. Scribble "Enjoy the Extra" on a note and leave a container on a friend's stoop, a grand gesture I call the drop 'n' dash. Even hermits can participate. *But I'm not sick*, she'll think. *But Christmas is past*, he'll think. And by every definition, both of you will feel warm and fed.

Then there's that grocery bagger, trying his best to make an honest buck. The girl behind the counter at Bojangles', the clerk at Belk, and the loader at Lowe's. Most of us have been there at one time or another, been one of the service industry's taken-for-granteds. You may deserve a break today, but they deserve a connection. Let them know they count. As they hand over your books/biscuits/bananas, look them in the eyes. When resolutions seem lofty, instead do something resolutely simple.

It's January. It's winter. American poet James Russell Lowell wrote, "Take winter as you find him and he turns out to be a thoroughly honest fellow with no nonsense in him." Which is just another way of saying, shake his hand hard and look him in the eye. And carry ChapStick.

When she isn't performing small acts of random kindness, Susan Kelly spends her time freelancing for Salt, *among other publications.*

MICHELE SIMPSON



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Tempests in a Teapot

A proper cup of tea – like family – deserves the right amount of respect and attention

By May-lee Chai

"While there is tea, there is hope"

– Arthur Wing Panero

I took my father to a local Wilmington restaurant once where the hot tea was not hot enough. He was appalled. Tepid tea was no tea at all. It was an abomination in his eyes, and he quietly poured his cup into the soup bowl when the waiter wasn't looking. It was too unfortunate to even keep the lukewarm liquid in his cup lest he forget and accidentally try to drink it.

The Japanese may have perfected the tea ceremony and elevated it into a semi-religious ritual, but the Chinese do not take their tea any less seriously.

Once in Taiwan, I was being chauffeured from Taipei to Keelung by a wealthy businesswoman who was checking on an apartment that she was having renovated. While she went in to talk to the foreman and investigate the progress, she left me with her driver. While waiting for her, I walked along the boardwalk and took pictures of the picturesque fishing boats along the docks. But after she still had not returned for a long while, her driver suggested we go for tea.

He suggested a small hole-in-the-wall restaurant that he assured me had the best tea in Keelung. As a native of Taiwan, he took his tea very seriously. There, he explained to me the correct manner of drinking the local tea. The small clay pot was filled with hot water, which was then discarded onto the dirt outside. This was to prime the clay pot, he said. Then the hot water was added with a measure of dried black leaves. The leaves were loose. Tea bags were an American invention that no self-respecting tea drinker would think of using, he said. The tea was poured into tiny clay cups, enough only for a few swallows. The tea was so hot each swallow had to be accompanied by a rapid inhalation of air.

As an American and a coffee drinker, I found it hard to drink and inhale air at the same time, and I started choking. Thank goodness my father was not present. My father's family has always taken their tea very seriously, and I would not have wanted him to witness my public outing as an inept tea drinker.

I remember when I was a very little girl hearing about the tea strike that my paternal grandmother led at her senior center in New York City, where Ye-ye and Nai-nai had immigrated from Taiwan in the 1950s. It was the 1970s, the era of stagflation, and my grandparents' senior center had decided to raise the price of tea by 5 cents to a full dime. Perhaps the center administrators thought it was a small way to recover the cost of the Styrofoam cups. Perhaps they thought no one would mind.

However, Nai-nai was outraged. Tea was now more expensive than coffee! What was the world coming to! She called my father at night just to complain. Everyone knew seniors didn't like coffee because it stained dentures and burned the stomach. It was a conspiracy to gouge the elderly, she was certain.

Nai-nai and Ye-ye were the only Chinese members of the senior center

Everyone else was white and Jewish. Nai-nai knew that many were immigrants, too, who had suffered like she and Ye-ye throughout World War II. But, as Holocaust survivors, they didn't have family members in America. Nai-nai considered herself fortunate, so she thought of a plan to help her friends fight this tea outrage.

While visiting our house in the suburbs over winter break, Nai-nai took all our teabags. She and Ye-ye preferred Chinese-style tea that was still loose and floated in the water, but she knew her friends at the senior center weren't used to drinking tea leaves that you had to spit out. So, she went through our cupboards while we were at the grocery store. After my grandparents had gone home, my mother went to fix tea one night and discovered every box was empty.

Nai-nai brought the teabags to the senior center. She instructed everyone what to do. "Order a cup of hot water," she said. Hot water was free. Then she pulled the teabags out of her voluminous purse, always perched on the crook of her arm. "Hold your hands up, like this," she gestured, a hand in front of the cup, so that the young people who volunteered at the cafeteria line wouldn't see, and she dipped the teabag in and out, in and out. "When they ask what we're drinking," she reminded everyone, "just smile."

She kept up the tea strike for a month. Finally, the senior center relented, dropping the price back down to a nickel.

Nai-nai recounted the details of her victory to us at our weekly family dinner. She smiled for the first time that summer.

Over the years, my father and his brothers would share the story again and again at our get-togethers every holiday. They would shake their heads and laugh. They would click their tongues against their teeth. But even though they laughed, I understood that they respected their mother's willingness to fight for her tea.

In Wilmington this winter, when my snowbird father flies in from Wyoming to wait out the months of bitter cold and ice and snow at home, I will take him to Café Zola, where the water is always piping hot and the tea leaves are always loose. Proprietor Manol Georgieff provides a selection of teas from around the world, and the leaves' flavors are well preserved in tightly capped glass jars. I know my father will approve of their attention to the details of a proper cup of tea.

Tea, like family, deserves our most careful attention.

*May-lee Chai is the author of eight books, including three novels (*My Lucky Face, Dragon Chica *and* Tiger Girl*) and two memoirs (*The Girl from Purple Mountain, Hapa Girl*). She is an assistant professor of creative writing at UNCW and still a coffee drinker.*

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Cold Water Warriors

How neoprene makes winter surfing bearable – and fun

By John Wolfe

They are the die-hards, the true believers who cannot wait for warm weather. So they squeeze into thick black neoprene suits, pull on rubber booties and gloves and head-restricting hoods to battle the cold sea of winter.

They are not the first surfers to do so; perhaps without realizing it, they tap into a tradition of cold-water surfing on the Carolina coast which dates back over a century.

On April 7, 1910, the Honolulu *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* published a letter by Wilmington resident Burke Haywood Bridgers, who had written to an early ambassador of surfing named Alexander Hume Ford to ask for specific details about the construction of Hawaiian surfboards. In his letter, Bridgers describes what the local surf was like back then: "The surf on this coast usually breaks within a hundred to a hundred and fifty yards of the shore, except in storms. So far, no one has been able to force a board out beyond the breakers in stormy weather. A pier is now being erected (Note: Bridgers was referring to a steel pier built by the Seashore Hotel, where the Blockade Runner stands today. This pier was destroyed by a nor'easter in 1921.) which during the coming summer will enable us to obviate this difficulty, and if the waves here are sufficiently large, or the wave-speed sufficiently fast, we should be able to do all that can be done in other places." A century ago, early Carolina surfers like Bridgers were already plotting to jump off the end of piers to ride our coast's massive storm surf in to shore.

"Locally, from the beginning, fishermen and surfers recognized the September rollers, generated by large storms out in the middle of the Atlantic. That's where we get our ground swell," says Skipper Funderburg, local surfing pioneer and historian. The waves are better in this area in the fall and the winter, due to the natural patterns of the North Atlantic Ocean. This fact, on June 29, 2016, prompted Gov. Pat McCrory to issue a gubernatorial decree proclaiming September 2016 as "Surfing Month" in North Carolina. Among other things, the document signed by the governor states that "favorable surf conditions exist during the fall months when surfers seek out big and well-groomed waves that grace our shoreline."

The obvious challenge to the early surfers who paddled out in fall and winter was the cold temperature of the water and air. "The first thing (when you're surfing this time of year) is not to get hypothermia, or get so cold that you get disoriented," says Funderburg. In the early days, surfers would wear knit garments of thick wool to keep warm (which I can't imagine were very effective – or comfortable). But shortly after the Second World War, two technological innovations developed by the military unexpectedly transformed the surfing

PHOTOGRAPH BY T.J. DRECHSEL PHOTOGRAPHY

culture: fiberglass, which replaced wood as the preferred surfboard construction material; and thick wetsuits, made of rubber. Divers had used them during the war, and the surplus soon leaked into civilian life. Manufactured primarily by a company called U.S. Divers, these suits were thick and cumbersome to move around in. A codpiece wrapped between the legs and buttoned in the front; if it came loose you had a "beavertail." Still, it was warmer than wool.

California surfing innovator Jack O'Neill, while flying on a DC-3 passenger plane in 1952, claims to have noticed a thin layer of neoprene beneath the carpet underfoot, used to insulate the cabin from the freezing high-altitude air. This, he says, was the inspiration for the first modern neoprene wetsuits — form-fitting, flexible and warm, a garment truly fit for a surfer. One can almost picture him hunched over with his trademark wild beard, sawing out a sample of airplane carpet with a pocketknife as surrounding passengers urgently mash the overhead button to summon the flight attendant. But that's only part of surfing lore. The real story is that neoprene wetsuits were actually invented one year earlier by Hugh Bradner, an American physicist and UC Berkeley professor who helped develop the atomic bomb with the Manhattan Project. He invented them while working with Navy Frogmen after the war, but never patented his invention, saying that he saw "no large commercial application."

Jack O'Neill, being more charismatic and the first one to market it successfully, often gets the invention credit. But regardless of origin, the popularity of the neoprene wetsuit spread nationwide during the first American surf boom of the 1960s, reaching across the country to our own Eastern shores.

Which is why the die-hards now wear neoprene while paddling out, carrying on their cold-water tradition. One must wonder, still: Why do they brave that cold, cold water? "For the love of it, man," was one surfer's response, when asked one November evening at Carolina Beach. Summer is both a memory and an anticipation. A wetsuit is a tool to combat nature's chill; a surfboard is sculpture which channels the ocean into one's heart. Who can wait until warm weather to taste the salt of this life when that fiery feeling of standing on top of the watery world is out there now, demanding to be stoked?

Skipper Funderburg remembers that feeling well. Although, these days, he says with a chuckle, "If I was going to go through all that trouble, squeezing into a suit and putting on the booties and gloves and hood and all that crap, I'd just as soon fly to where the surf is better and it's still warm: Hawaii!"

John Wolfe writes regularly for Salt's *"On the Water" column*

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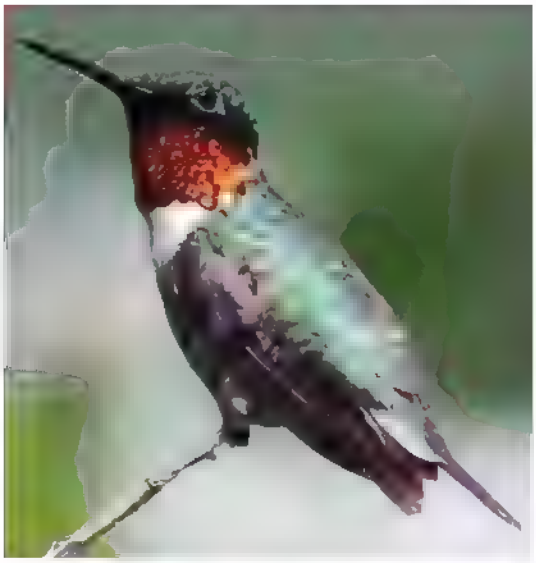
Tougher Than They Look

Wintering ruby-throated hummingbirds



PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBRA REGULA

By Susan Campbell

Wait — hummingbirds here?

In the colder months? Actually, yes! Along the North Carolina coast you may well encounter a ruby-throated friend at late-blooming flowers or a remaining feeder. These tiny birds, whose habitat is moderated at this time of year by the proximity of the Gulf Stream, are more than capable of surviving the winter season in our region.

Until the mid-1990s we had no idea that these tiny birds were here, let alone that they could handle the colder temperatures of late fall or winter. Most do migrate to Mexico and Central America and are gone by early November. But given the increase in sightings, as well as in research, we now know that although they are not common, they are not as rare as we once thought. Although most appear to breed farther north, there is mounting evidence that some found this time of the year along the Outer Banks may now be year-round residents.

Every year, ruby-throated hummingbirds are spotted away from feeders, defending Russian olive bushes, Japanese honeysuckle or mahonia. These common landscaping plantings that, although not native species, are highly attractive to hummingbirds. They all flower late in the year and, in spite of them having pale blooms, ruby-throated hummingbirds find them with ease. These and thick, evergreen native plants also provide important cover that shelters hummingbirds from the elements as well as potential predators. Lurking bird hawks such as sharp-shinned hawks will threaten them or even grab them for a quick snack.

When it comes to hummingbirds in general, most people are just learning that they are actually mainly carnivores: They consume large numbers of insects throughout the course of the year. Along the coast — as we know — tiny bugs are abundant in marsh as well as adjacent maritime forest habitats even in the winter. The sugar hummingbirds consume is very secondary, although may be more important during periods of extreme cold and even more when there is ice. During icy weather, when the surface of vegetation is covered, spiders, midges, flies and the like will be scarce for a time. This will not only be a challenge for hummingbirds, but for our other insect-eating winter visitors such as kinglets, warblers and wrens. For those feeding sugar water during the coldest days of the year, keeping it thawed is important, especially early in the morning. Simply rotating a warm feeder for one that begins to freeze or placing a warm bulb next to the feeder should work. However, the typical (four parts water: one part sugar) solution will not begin to freeze until the air temperature around the feeder drops below 27 degrees.

My research has revealed that the winter hummingbird population here is quite dynamic. Ruby-throateds may wander during the course of the season. It is not unusual to find more than one bird at a location, as well as replacement of individuals over time — quite like we see in the summer months. However, some birds are very territorial and stay in one place. They may even return to the same feeder from year to year. Another very curious fact is that the western species of hummingbirds can be mixed in with our familiar ruby-throated hummingbirds. Unfortunately they appear to look very similar; species such as black-chinned, rufous and calliope are a real challenge to differentiate, especially since few are adult males who sport more distinctive plumage.

Regardless, I am very envious of those who are lucky enough to host a hummingbird or two all year long. And I am, of course, very interested in winter hummingbird sightings. Reports from residents around North Carolina are what fuel my research at this time of the year in particular. So, please let me know if you catch sight of or are hosting a hummingbird currently so it can become part of our statewide database.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos at susan@ncaves.com

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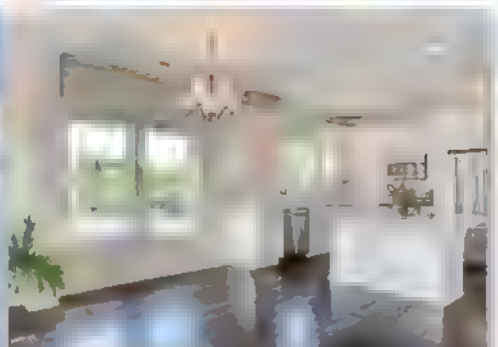

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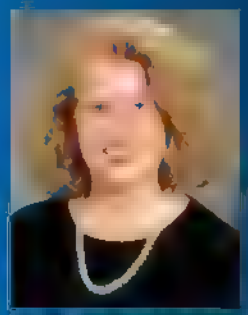

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Finding the Path

Our intrepid outdoor writer comes inside to find a meditative practice that serves the community

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

Fifteen years ago, after a spectacularly stressful period in my life, I tried meditation. I sat on a pillow, in the corner of my bedroom, practicing "square breathing" for hours. Inhale to the count of four, hold for the count of four, exhale for the count of four, hold for the count of four, repeat. It helped a bit, but it always felt a bit prescriptive, and I never managed to empty my mind fully; it just hummed along all the while.

Then, 12 years ago, I discovered sea kayaking. Technically challenging, it was deeply engaging. My mind was full, but only of what needed to be done in the present moment in the wind, waves and current. Currents, weather and situations changed rapidly on the water, and to kayak the ocean, I had to adapt quickly, reflexively, with each stroke. After a while, I noticed that on these journeys, I vanished. My thrumming mind could not contain anything other than the present, and when a kayak trip was over, I felt profoundly at ease even if the seas were challenging. Sea kayaking, for me, induced a kind of meditative state, but one where I was actively engaged; it seemed oddly counterintuitive to find peace in an activity so physically and mentally demanding.

Then, three years ago, my mother was dying at the same time my only child was preparing to leave for college. It was a hectic and painful period, and I lost the time and then the desire to kayak much for a long time. Sea kayaking requires a great deal of planning and preparation, and though I wasn't abandoning it altogether, I needed something more readily accessible.

My neighbor kept suggesting yoga. I politely ignored her recommendation for two years. I thought of yoga as something done by impossibly fit women in expensive leggings before they headed off to a cedar sauna or a deep tissue massage. At least that's how it always looked in the Lululemon and Athleta catalogs.

Then I read about Blair Bigham, a young yoga teacher in Wilmington who uses her practice as a form of service in the community. She's even started a bi-weekly yoga class at the Good Shepherd Homeless Shelter in Wilmington. Something clicked in my mind. I had most loved meditative activities that engaged me so deeply that I lost myself completely. Blair's yoga practice, called Kunga yoga, has a strong community service component. I'd been struggling with my own calls to service — was volunteerism enough, or was a career adjustment in order? I finally gave in and signed up for some yoga classes in town and gave Blair a call.

She'd just returned from a two-week mission trip to Sierra Leone, and even though she was jet-lagged, she invited me to join her at Good Shepherd to learn more about her work. I was surprised by Blair's youth, she's a mere 20 years old — but she projects a calm poise of someone who has found her place in the world. Everything about her is loose and comforting, from her wind-tossed honey-blonde hair, to her ocean-blue eyes, radiant, open face, and joyful laugh.

We rang the bell at the entrance and a staff member let us in. Dinner was over, and residents were gathered in the main area to watch the news and plan for the following day.

"Anyone want to do some yoga?" she called out. "Please join us at seven in the dining room."

The floors were freshly mopped, the chairs turned upside down on the tabletops, and six blue and red baby booster seats were stacked along one

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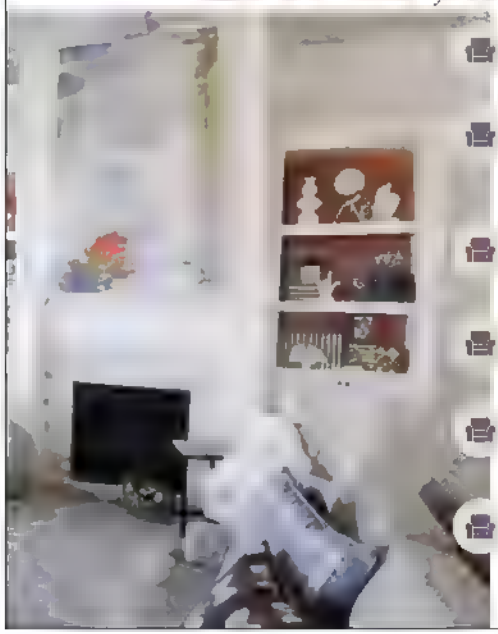
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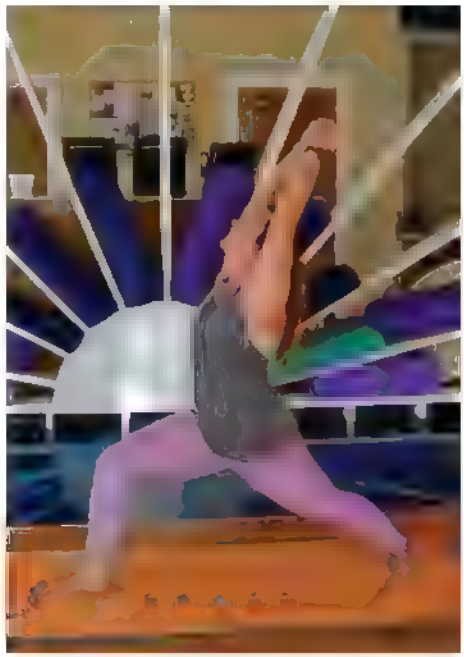
wall, a reminder that families trying to get back on their feet are common here.

"I volunteered here for about two years as a server before I asked if I could start a yoga practice here. In Kunga yoga we try to extend our practice to the community. Kunga is a Kinyerwandan word that means 'to serve and help.'" In addition to serving in needy areas in Wilmington, the Kunga teachers also extend their practice internationally. When the teaching program began in Wilmington,



the teachers worked to help orphans of the Rwandan genocide. Now, teachers trained in Wilmington donate 5 percent of their profits to the orphaned girls of Home of Hope in India.

As Blair set up a few mats along a cheerful yellow wall, a couple of residents joined us. One gray-haired woman asked if yoga would help her back. Blair encouraged her to give the class a try and explained that she works with each client's limitations. The woman looked encouraged and agreed to try the following week. A tall, wiry middle-aged resident named Matt was eager to join in. He rolled out one of Blair's mats, removed his black tennis shoes, and assumed the lotus position across from Blair. No one looks like they belong in a catalog. Matt is wearing an immaculate red Piggly Wiggly shirt, and Blair is dressed in a knit cap, a red and black lumberjack shirt and loose black pants. She begins the class by guiding us through deep, gentle breaths and gradually deepening stretches. But it's her voice, warm, soothing, and clear, that carries the class. Her postures are soft, and as the class continues,

I notice Matt's shoulders drop, and his hands, which had been balled tightly, open and relax as the class continues. When Blair wraps up, she says, "The light in me honors the light in you. Namaste." He thanks her and walks off happily toward the television room.

"Matt!" Blair calls. "Your shoes!"

He comes back over and laughs. "There's something you can write," he says to me. "He was so relaxed he forgot his shoes!"

After class, Blair explains that teaching at Good Shepherd is challenging for her but she loves it. The population changes from class to class as residents get back on their feet, and she has to adjust to new clients' needs during each class. Sometimes residents stay for a few weeks.

"I had a family come to my classes for a couple of months. A mom, dad, and two kids. They all did it together while they were here, and I was so happy to share these relaxation techniques with them during such a stressful time. I tell them they always have access to relaxation if they keep bringing themselves back to the breath."

Blair knows from experience that yoga can help people during hard times. As a child and teenager, she watched her brother struggle and survive leukemia. Then, when she was 16, her father died suddenly from a heart attack.

"His death was very surprising. I went through a really tough depression. One day my friend was, like, come try yoga. I went, and I automatically felt this relief. And I thought it was crazy. I'd never felt anything like this. I started going every single day. It has encouraged me to reach out to people and encourage them to reach out, build confidence and strength."

Though she was admitted to UNCW, she felt her path was teaching yoga, and she decided to forgo college to become a certified yoga teacher and is engaged in an intensive Kunga yoga teacher training program. "I want to continue to teach and deepen my practice. I've been looking for a space to teach veterans, and I especially want to work with children, especially those with cancer or who have an ill relative, because it's such a stressful time."

In this way, Blair seems to be coming full circle. She began yoga to soothe her pain; now she is teaching others the skills she's learned. I began taking classes at Salty Dog Yoga in Carolina Beach. She's certainly shown me during her classes that yoga isn't the self-indulgent practice I thought it was, or a way to escape pain. Instead, it's a practice that can connect people, an offering of love, compassion and respect.

Namaste.

Author Virginia Holman, a regular Salt *contributor, teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington.*

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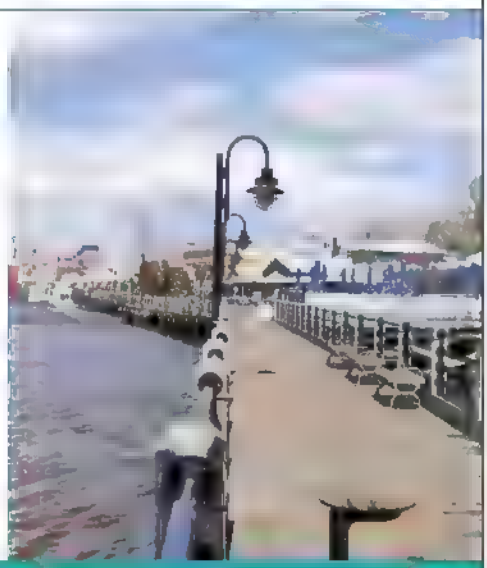
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but your posture is stern and straight.
Rising, I moan like only I can, still unconvinced.

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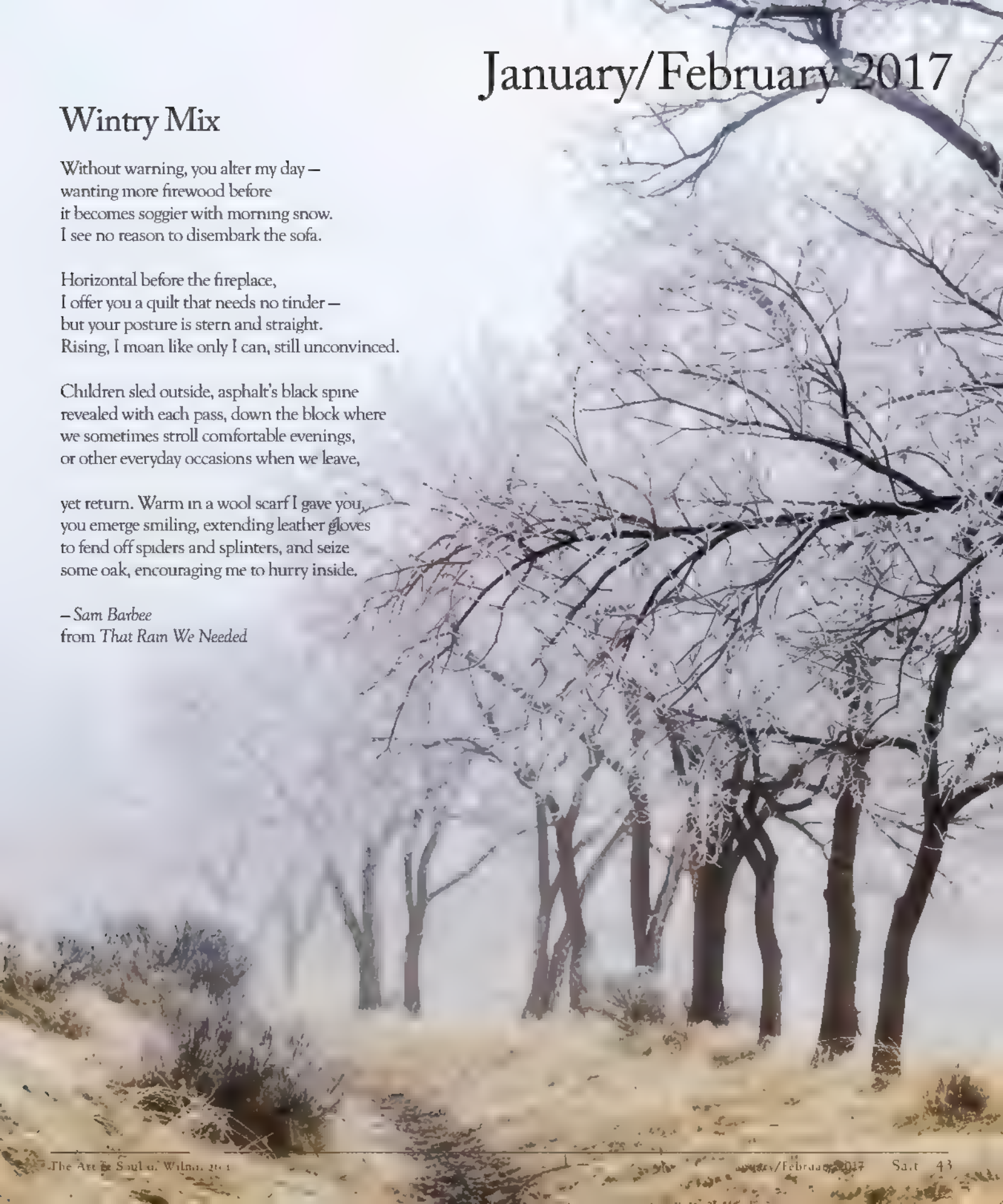
revealed with each pass, down the block where
we sometimes stroll comfortable evenings,
or other everyday occasions when we leave,

yet return. Warm in a wool scarf I gave you,
you emerge smiling, extending leather gloves
to fend off spiders and splinters, and seize
some oak, encouraging me to hurry inside.

– *Sam Barbee*
from *That Rain We Needed*



GONE DOUGHNUTS

How our man on the town ate every doughnut he could find – almost

By Jason Frye · Photographs by Andrew Sherman

First came frozen yogurt, the 72-item topping bar and paying-by-the-pound. Next it was gourmet cupcakes. For a brief and brilliant moment, these two overlapped and the dentists of Wilmington rejoiced.

Now there's a new sugary obsession taking over the Cape Fear region. Doughnuts.

In every part of the city and in every beach town around there's a new place touting its doughnut prowess. We've got doughnut shops, like Britt's, that have been serving since 1939 and other spots that haven't been open 1,939 hours, we've got Krispy Kremes and Dunkin' Donuts; we've got Entemanns and Little Debbie and Hostess selling doughnuts in every grocery and gas station around.

In short, we have reached Peak Doughnut.

All of that is the long way around to say this: I made it my New Year's resolution to eat every doughnut in town – save Britt's because it's open seasonally but I know its doughnut well.

Lose weight? Nah. Eat better? Nope. Eat all the doughnuts? Yes, sir, sign me up.

I approached my resolution with zest and enthusiasm, but I am sad to report that I have reached Peak Doughnut and I failed in my endeavor to eat every doughnut in town. I did, however, eat 40 doughnuts from four of the most prominent doughnut shops in town: Wake N Bake, The Donut Inn, Rise, and Duck Donuts.

Here's what I learned.

Wake N Bake

Carolina Beach, Downtown Wilmington

All of us know what's up with Wake N Bake, and whether you decide on a pair of morning doughnuts at 8:40 a.m. or just the perfect sugary hit at 4:20 p.m., these guys deliver. There seems to be a bottomless bucket of creativity in the kitchen there because of the glazes, toppings and fillings in its yeast doughnuts, cake doughnuts, filled doughnuts, fritters and stuffed doughnuts. Want Fruity Pebbles on a doughnut, or maybe potato chips? They got you covered. In need of a Boston Cream doughnut AND bacon? Got it. How about a slice of pie in your doughnut (because why not make the Turducken of doughnuts)? This is your place.

Glazed This yeasty delight serves as the base doughnut at Wake N Bake. It's big, but the glaze isn't too heavy, so it's easy to eat without feeling like you'll shoot off into outer space.

Pebble Rock When you add vanilla glaze and Fruity Pebbles to the classic glazed doughnut, you get this sweet, crunchy, fruity (?) delight. There's a delightful play of textures here with the still-crunchy cereal and the soft doughnut that makes this a star. Plus, Fruity Pebbles.

Wake N Bacon Maple glaze and crumbled bacon meet atop the standard glazed doughnut for a sweet/savory treat with the added bonus of bacon. It's a good version of the bacon doughnut (would be better if Benton's Bacon were used, but what wouldn't?), but the interplay of salt and sweet is better served in the following doughnut.

Chocolate Couch Potato where the chocolate glaze delivers a sweet punch and the handful of crumbled potato chips bring a salty, crunchy element that's a thing of beauty.

Vegan Glazed The vegan edition of the glazed doughnut. Smaller than its non-vegan cousin but no less tasty. The texture is different – this doughnut is denser – but the flavor is spot-on. If you like vegan food.

Cake-of-the-Day: Pumpkin A solid cake doughnut with a light fry and no lingering greasy feel or flavor, it was neither too pumpkin-y nor too spicy, but was a good balance of both.

Dat Ghost Fire A beautiful, but intimidating doughnut, this Boston Cream-based confection is sweet, hot and irresistible. The ghost pepper-infused chocolate glaze, candied jalapeño, chocolate-cherry whipped filling will make you scratch your head, but grab a glass of milk and take a big bite. You'll find the pepper in the chocolate, and boy, is it ever in the chocolate, but trust the lactic sugars in the glaze and the cream filling to help dull the capsaicin punch and you're in for a treat: chocolaty, the surprising fruitiness of the pepper, the lovely cream filling. It's a superb doughnut for fans of big heat and doughnut aficionados alike.

THE DONUT INN

Wilmington at the corner of Eastwood and Oleander

Doughnuts, fritters, cigars (not the smoking kind, the pastry roll made of cinnamon, brown sugar and walnuts) and some excellent breakfast sandwiches, plus the charming accent of a South African doughnut attendant, are on offering here. They've added a handful of bagels to the menu and are slowly expanding their lineup across the board.

Classic Glazed This is a fair representation of the style. Not too much yeast, not too much glaze, plenty of pillowy doughnut goodness.

Apple Cider A good crusty, cakey doughnut that delivered on the cider flavor and didn't kill that with too much cinnamon and sugar coating. It didn't over-deliver in the apple or the cider department, but a touch more of each would possibly make it a next-level doughnut.

Maple Glazed Base doughnut plus maple glaze, sans bacon. In fact, the only maple doughnut I tasted without bacon. Needs bacon.

Chocolate Glazed This is a lovely doughnut to look at. Nice chocolate glaze, pretty caramel and vanilla drizzle, nice edge of sprinkles. If you're the chocolate-coated doughnut type, give it a whirl.

Jelly Doughnut It's a pillowy, powdered sugar-coated, raspberry jelly-filled doughnut that would make an awesome base for a take on the Monte Cristo sandwich.

Blueberry A cake doughnut with a hint of glaze. It's good, light and easy to eat, especially with a cup of coffee.

Old Fashioned The malty sweetness of this cakey, unglazed doughnut makes it a top-notch representation of the style. As with the Blueberry, it's small and easy to eat.

Raised Sugar It's a glazed doughnut minus glaze plus cinnamon and sugar. And it's good, but I say commit, man. Commit to the classic glazed or the smaller, cakey cinnamon and sugar doughnut, or bust your resolution (and pants) wide open and get both.

Vanilla Fluff Another filled doughnut that's been doused in powdered sugar, but this time it was filled with vanilla fluff. It's a split doughnut that practically begs for a savory addition like a bit of crumbled bacon or a cheeseburger.

Boston Cream An exemplary Boston Cream doughnut. The chocolate glaze and vanilla cream match nicely, and the doughnut itself is soft, making for quick eating.

Glazed Croissant The surprise hit of The Donut Inn, the glazed croissant was buttery, crispy, perfectly sweet and outstanding.

BRITT'S DONUT SHOP

Carolina Beach

There's only one kind of doughnut here: perfect. It's a yeast doughnut fried to the ideal balance between soft, airy interior and crispy exterior, then the doughnuts are fished out, put on a stick and mopped with a simple glaze. Somewhere in the process these doughnuts acquire a hint of salt — is it the recipe or the sea breeze? we'll never know — and that balance of salt and sweet, airy and crispy makes for an ideal doughnut experience. Stand in line like a sucker and get a bag (or two) to go, or walk right in, belly up to the bar, order a cup of coffee or milk and a bag of doughnuts and eat them right there. Open seasonally. If you don't know when, I feel sorry for you (OK, it's March 27.)

DUCK DONUTS

Mayfaire right behind Five Guys Burgers

Duck Donuts comes to us from the Outer Banks of North Carolina and they're doing something different: making doughnuts a la minute, which is a fancy way to say they're making doughnuts to order.

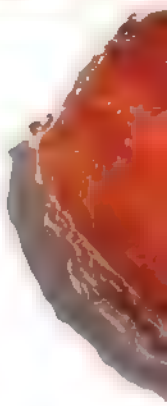
That's right, no big rack of doughnuts going stale. No case of doughnuts getting cold. Only a machine that plops out perfect little doughnut dough rings into hot oil and a two-minute wait while the doughnuts cook, flip, cook and then cool. And then someone slathers on the toppings you want.

And they've got toppings for days. Your choice of Coatings — glazed, powdered sugar, peanut butter icing, maple icing and more — and Toppings — like sprinkles, bacon, Oreos — and Drizzles — hot fudge, raspberry, blackberry and salted caramel — on a fresh doughnut. How's that?

Doughnut: Bare The plain doughnut, no coating, topping, drizzle or frill. This vanilla cake base is delicious, plain and simple. A little sweetness from the batter, but nothing overwhelming. On the flip side, it's not underwhelming, in fact, it's got a lot of flavor and texture going on and makes for a fine morning treat.

Lemon Coconut The subtleness to the lemon flavor and the nutty coconut make this an interesting confection in that it's neither too lemony nor too coconutty, but, rather, is just right.

Peanut Butter with Chocolate Drizzle Dear Duck Donuts, please take a lesson from *Spinal Tap* and turn the Peanut Butter up to 11.



Cinnamon Bun A tasty option where the cinnamon-sugar coating takes the place of icing and a bit of vanilla drizzle gives you that cinnamon bun feel you're looking for, except it's nothing like a cinnamon bun.

Vanilla with Salted Caramel Drizzle More salt in the salted caramel drizzle would make this pop. Or, even better, how about a little sprinkling of some sea salt from right here in Wrightsville Beach or from Duck Donuts' home base, the Outer Banks? Just a pinch of salt somewhere to bring a little balance back into the glaze and drizzle.

Maple Bacon A stellar doughnut. Building off that awesome base, they add a thin bit of maple and then big, meaty, smoky chunks of bacon. It's what you want in a bacon doughnut.

RISE

Landfall Shopping Center

Rise opened in Durham in 2012, and its menu consists of two things: biscuits and doughnuts. The biscuits are excellent, taking a great and simple biscuit, then stuffing some deliciousness—fried bologna, eggplant "bacon," country ham, even just plain old butter—between the halves. Its doughnuts are much the same: a bit of the traditional with some wacky new things thrown in for good measure.

Glazed What I love about the plain old glazed doughnut is that it shows everything—the good and the bad—that goes into the doughnut. This one is most excellent. Yeasty, sweet, beautiful, the right size, it's everything you want in a glazed doughnut.

Chocolate Icing As chocolate iced doughnuts go, it's at the head of the class. The chocolate is rich and there's just enough there to give you a good chocolate fix without making you feel like you just ate a can of icing.

Vanilla with Sprinkles As someone who doesn't like sprinkles, I was not a fan of this doughnut. That said, it's the glazed doughnut (awesome) with vanilla icing (awesome) and sprinkles (meh), so it tastes good, it's just not for me.

Old Fashioned with Lemon Icing This delicious cake doughnut is topped with a lemony drizzle and is almost scone-like in flavor and texture.

Cinnamon Twist Sometimes the simplest doughnuts are the best, and this one is a simple braided doughnut bar that shows how good just a few ingredients can be.

Apple Fritter If you like fritters, you'll like this fritter. Crispy, apple-licious, and awesome, it's a crowd pleaser.

Maple Bacon Bar A Long John-style doughnut with a whole strip of thick, smoky, salty bacon. If they toned down the maple glaze just a little it would be perfection.

Crème Brûlée Go. Now. Get. A. Dozen.

Pineapple Basil with Pistachios One of the most interesting, and most flavorful, options on its doughnut menu, this one really shines. The pistachio brings in a bit of earthiness that tempers the sweet pineapple, and the herbaceous basil gives the whole thing a mouthwatering quality that's hard to replicate.

Caramel Peanut Long John The caramel's sticky and the peanuts are salty and the texture of the Long John is just right.

Pumpkin Spiced Latte Because why not?

S'More I'm not a fan of s'mores (crazy, right?) but this marshmallow fluff filled, chocolate and marshmallow and graham cracker topped doughnut makes for a pretty good reinvention of the campfire classic.

Cheerwine So many places will put Cheerwine in or on a thing to no good end. Not so here. This is a glazed doughnut with an awesome Cheerwine glaze.

Caramel Apple This doughnut's filled with apple butter and topped in a caramel sauce, so it tastes like the real thing minus the risk of pulling out a filling.

Chocolate Chocolate Cake A chocolate cake doughnut with chocolate icing and crumbled chocolate cake on top. What's not to love?

So that's it. A near-40-year-old man eating 40 doughnuts and throwing his sugar-smeared hands in the face of a sensible New Year's resolution. Unlike the weight that will certainly be hanging on for the next five years, I'm unsure about Wilmington's ability to support all but the strongest and most inventive of doughnut shops for the long haul. But that's OK. Five years ago we were up to our eyeballs in empty yogurt cups and cupcake wrappers and, hey, we're still here. We'll survive the inevitable passing of the doughnut craze and we'll all fall in love with the next thing: perhaps artisanal mac n' cheese served in a cone.

Jason Frye is in a doughnut-induced coma until Feb. 2, at which time he will rise from his bed and test the wind for the aroma of doughnuts. If he smells a doughnut, that means a hot, humid summer with a terrible beach body; if he doesn't smell a doughnut, that means a hot, humid summer with a terrible beach body.

Cottontails & Lintheads

The Spofford Mill is long gone, but the beloved working-class community it created has genuine staying power – and one proud heart

By Mark Holmberg

Woven into the fabric of central Wilmington is an uncanny story of a "city within a city," a mini-town so deliberately self-contained, children growing up there rarely left its embrace. And if they dared to stray onto the bordering wealthy estates, "they'd holler for us to get onto the other side," said 88-year-old Joyce Sawyer Barefoot, who was born in this sturdy mill village that lingers today.

She was among the legions of young "cottontails" and "lintheads" — as town people called them — who grew up in the 170 or so tiny cottages built around the vast Delgado/Spofford cotton mill that began completely transforming this part of town 116 years ago.

"We thought we were rich then," Barefoot recalled. "We had a wonderful, wonderful childhood." Yes, they were aware most of the rest of town considered them lower-class mill kids, but they didn't care.

"We were proud of ourselves — but no one else was," said 67-year-old Barbara Brock Pigford, who also grew up in the mill village and continues to live there today. Their memories of childhood and these tough little homes are as good and durable as the clean, white broadcloth churned out by the mile each day in the mill.

Since this is sort of a John Steinbeck novel in reverse, let's begin with a Wilmington newspaper's idyllic description as the 1900s began and the mill's first whistle blast echoed across town:

"This time last January the 'Mineral Spring' two miles from the city, on the shell road, was a lonely but pretty spot in the midst of a young long leaf pine forest. The wind sighed ceaselessly through the pine tops and little did the people of Wilmington dream that the scene would soon shift."

Cotton was king in this key Southern city (think of the Cotton Exchange and the Sprunt fortunes). Why not mill it here as other Southern cities were doing? By Thanksgiving 1899, nearly 100 engineers and machinists were installing milling equipment of the vast Delgado Cotton Mills Co. that would churn some 6 million yards of broadcloth each year (that's roughly 9 miles a day) for the next 67 years.

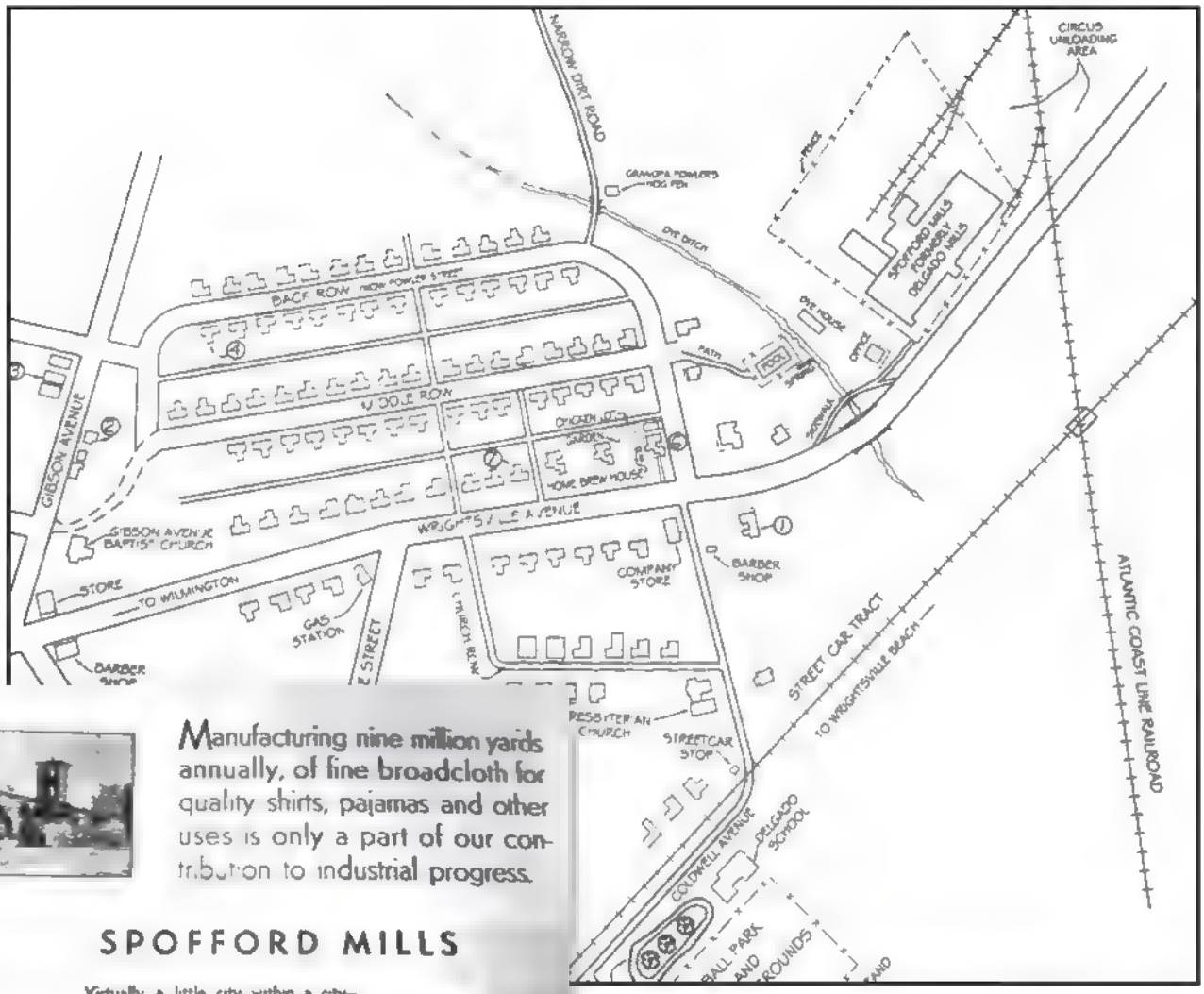
In 1900, a $650 frame elementary school for 71 students was built at the mill, replaced in 1914 by the larger brick school on Colwell Avenue that stands today.

The mill also quickly built more than 100 tiny but solidly built frame cottages with cedar shake roofs in a carefully planned, oval-shaped plot now containing Dexter, Kent and Fowler streets, and Wrightsville and Delgado avenues. The early ones were pre-fabbed and shipped to the 100-acre site by rail. Later ones were stick-built on-site.

Twins Troy and Roy Hadley still live in one of the original houses at the corner of Dexter and Newton streets.

"Neither one of us married, so we just stayed here," Troy, 72, said.

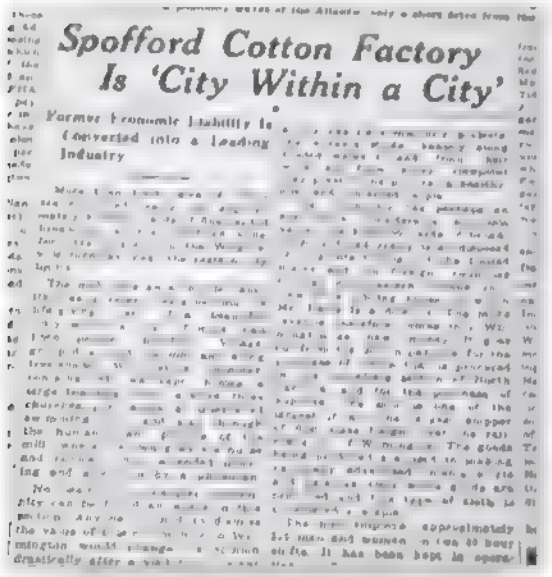
Their parents worked at the mill, as did the boys.



Manufacturing nine million yards annually, of fine broadcloth for quality shirts, pajamas and other uses is only a part of our contribution to industrial progress.

SPOFFORD MILLS

Virtually a little city within a city—Here hundreds of employes live in well kept houses—Earning and spending with Wilmington people—Buying the things



Spofford Cotton Factory Is 'City Within a City'

Former Economic Liability Is Converted into a Leading Industry

Mrs. Armstong's Third Grade Class, (Delgado) 1931-32)

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK STEELMAN

L-R: Sandra Stubbs, Barbara Pigford, Joyce Barefoot

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK HOLMBERG

Above: Longtime resident Marshall Martin, grandson of mill workers

Left: Troy Hadley

"They weren't bad people to work for," Troy said. "No qualms at all." Except in the summer. "It was a hot job. That mill was hot!"

He picked quills, the spools of cotton thread that fed the hungry weaving machines, making $90 a week back in the late '50s, as best as he can recall. But much earlier on, the mill paid low wages for long hours, roughly $20 a week for 60 hours. But by the 1930s, after it had changed hands, the Spofford Mill earned a reputation for benevolence, honoring wage-hour agreements even if it meant losses, according to a newspaper report at the time.

"No healthier or happier community can be found anywhere in this section," the *Wilmington Star* newspaper reported in 1950.

The had their own spring-fed, Olympic-sized swimming pool with a diving board — believed to have been just the second pool in Wilmington at the time — as well as a doctor's office with a full-time nurse, a visiting dentist, churches, garden plots, dances and holiday galas, sporting competitions and swarms of children growing up and playing together.

"We had a good life," Barbara Pigford said as she and almost lifelong resident Sandra Stubbs gathered at Barefoot's immaculately restored house on Spofford Circle. "We were healthy kids."

"Absolutely marvelous," said Sandra Stubbs, whose cottage across the street is clad in bricks from the mill's smokestack when the factory was demolished in 1972, five years after it closed.

Nearly 100 years ago, the mill started adding cottages in another section across the shell road, including part of modern Wrightsville Avenue, Hill and Circle streets and Spofford Circle. It's still known as New Mill Hill or just New Hill, as opposed to Old Hill across the way.

Imagine! The children had their own central, circular playground known as the "pea field" that remains today. ("That's how you can tell if you're a local," Stubbs said, "if you call it the 'pea field.'")

Some of the kids would drain the pool every Friday and refill it on Monday. "It was freezing cold!" Pigford said as her longtime companions nodded.

The clanging trolley to Shell Island (Wrightsville Beach) rumbled right past their village. The Cape Fear Country Club, where some of the boys caddied, was on the other side. They would play in the little creek — "the dye ditch" — that still runs under Wrightsville Avenue. (Contrary to legend, it wasn't colored with dye.)

"Everybody watched everybody's children," Stubbs said. "We were all family."

Virtually every little bungalow was an open house to neighborhood children. Families shifted around to the slightly different-sized cottages as babies were born or kids grew up and moved on. "We moved from over there to over here, to there," Pigford said, pointing around her beloved neighborhood that has changed surprisingly little.

The mill was the village's protector and benefactor, its reason for existing.

Artist Doug Campbell inside his Hill Street house. PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK HOLMBERG

"When Hurricane Hazel came in 1954, everyone went into the basement of the mill," Stubbs recalled. "We were playing on the bales" of cotton

So you can imagine the shock to the village when the mill closed in 1967

"It ruined everything around here," Pigford said. "People around here in their 40s and 50s, that was all they had ever done their whole life." Some found work at Timmie Corporation, another textile manufacturer in town. Others moved away to work at other cotton mills in North Carolina and beyond. "My dad moved us to Roanoke Rapids," Barefoot said. (But of course she moved back.)

"I went into carpentry work when the mill closed down," Troy Hadley said.

The mill was demolished in 1972 (the Creek Apartments were later built on the site) but its stately office still stands at 2231 Wrightsville Ave. The bungalows were sold mostly to the mill families for $2,000 to $3,400, depending on the size and location

But time hasn't treated Old Mill Hill and New Mill Hill equally.

"If you look around here you can see that," Hadley said. He has watched more than a few of the Old Hill houses get torn down. Many others were bought up by a developer and are now rentals. And some commercial buildings moved into the village when it was rezoned.

But New Hill has jealously guarded its identity. It even successfully fought off being designated as a historic neighborhood because residents have a low tolerance for any kind of meddling. One of the 600-square-foot bungalows burned and was replaced with a big, modern house, and a few others had to be demolished recently. But for the most part, much of New Hill looks the same as it did and is largely privately owned. Even the old original boarding house still stands.

Many owners have added on to the back of their cottages. (Apparently, that was the plan when the mill laid out the narrow but deep lots.) Some, like Stubbs and Barefoot, have completely renovated so their homes look almost new inside and out. Others have worked with original structures to create delightfully artistic and cozy modern homes with vaulted ceilings and a mix of original woods and modern materials, lighting and appliances. The deluxe Hill Street kitchen and dining area of a retired pastry chef, Brad (he preferred his last name not to be published), could appear in any home or cooking magazine.

The bungalow of well-known artist Doug Campbell — you can see his work inside and out at Indochine — is as wild and distinctive as any home in Wilmington, with stone, wood, original paintings and metalwork mashed up artfully in the house and garden. When he moved his studio to Hill Street in 1992, "you could buy the whole block for $100,000. Mine was $18,000."

It's a sweet, somewhat isolated place between town and the beach filled with the kind of small houses that are increasingly trendy as kid-free boomers and millennials collide in the housing market. "There's an assortment of people," Campbell said. "Just an interesting place."

Thus, you have young surf instructor Jonathan Sundberg renovating his first home two doors down from 65-year-old Marshall Martin, whose grandparents lived there and worked at the mill.

Yes, an old cotton mill is still what binds this neighborhood together

The existing "cottontails" and "linthead" still gather every fall to remember and celebrate a grand childhood in this most distinctive neighborhood woven into the fabric of Wilmington, this city within a city where, as Barbara Pigford said, "We had a good life."

Mark Holmberg splits his time between Richmond, Virginia and the Port City, writing and roaming, believing there's room for good ol' printed words about believers and strays and adventurers.

PHOTOGRAPHS By MARK STEELMAN

ALONG THE Little Amazon

A behind-the-book look at Taylor Brown's forthcoming novel The River of Kings

By Taylor Brown

It was March 2002, and the Altamaha River was running high and cold and dark, grumbling at its banks. This was Georgia's "Little Amazon," a 137-mile serpent of fresh water that slithered and kinked across the state, delivering the alluvium that helped build the sea islands of the Georgia coast — my birthplace. There were bald eagles here, glaring from their roosts, and alligators sunned themselves along the bars. Old-growth cypress trees stood tall as castle turrets, and the depths were stoned for century-old sturgeon, some the size of ships' cannons.

I was 21 years old, an English major at the University of Georgia, and this was my spring break, a three-day paddle trip down the Altamaha with three of my closest friends. At that time, this was not really my idea of fun. I was an Eagle Scout, but a bad one. Having just attained drinking age, I had other pursuits. But my buds were going, and I went along.

That morning, with the dawn mist lying heavy over the water, and my head cloudy with sleep, the current had seemed to suck me along, accelerating my boat faster and faster, toward the bank, until I met a dead cypress tree at ramming speed. The kayak flipped, and I was doused in cold, cold darkness. Later, hunched over shivering in my righted boat, hand-pumping river water from between my legs, I really wished I were on a beach somewhere. Of course, I had no idea that this trip would, more than a decade later, lead to my second novel, *The River of Kings*, in which two brothers deliver their father's ashes down the river of his birth, this river.

"Hunter, the younger, steps knee-deep into the current, and he can feel the weight of it pulling at this calves and ankles, the dark pull that is like an ambition. The spring rains charge down the dark swales of the Appalachian foothills, rumbling in wider and deeper confluence, birthing rivers that slither for the sea. Midway, they tumble and crash over the Fall Line, the belt of shoals and waterfalls and hydroelectric dams that marks the lost edge of the continent, past which the state of Georgia was once the bottom of a prehistoric sea. The fossils of ancient corals and mollusks are found far upcountry, and the land is full of sharks' teeth." — *The River of Kings*, p. 4

I have never thought of my work as being very autobiographical. In fact, I've long taken some high-nosed satisfaction in the fact that my fiction could never be construed as thinly veiled memoir. However, again and again, I find that I can trace threads of my stories back to some direct experience. On this trip, it would not be that rude dunk in the morning river, but something more sinister.

That afternoon, we stopped to rest at a bend in the river, climbing a small bank in search of shade. There, to our surprise, we found a footpath leading into the woods. At this point, we were miles from any known settlements or residences. The Nature Conservancy has called the Altamaha River one of the world's 75 "Last Great Places."

and this lack of civilization is the main reason why. The river is undammed, crossed by roads only five times in its entire length, and in the '90s, the state outlawed the floathouses ("shantyboats") that once lined the riverbanks. We followed the footpath into the woods, and what we found there is just what the brothers in the novel find:

"Hunter follows, a little behind, careful of his own feet, the sound they make. The wind rises, swirling through the trees, leaves humming on every side. They are fifty yards down the path when they cross a small creek and find an alligator gar lying across the trail, gutted. It is four feet long, a torpedo of a fish with hard, enameled scales and outsized teeth. A living fossil, dead. A warning. A black vent has been sliced in the yellow belly, the innards scooped out and left to rot in a ropy pile. Maggots glisten in the cavity. Flies abound, ticking like tiny robots across the exposed viscera. It smells like it looks.

Lawton lowers himself to one knee and cocks his head, examining the work. Hunter starts to say something but Lawton's blue eyes cut toward him, killing the words in his chest. Now Lawton rises, and on they move. The path winds deeper into the woods, zagging around deadfalls of old timber, crossing shallow streams where Lawton kneels for prints. Hunter is breathing hard now, like he would after a standing block chop. He looks down and finds the hand-ax at his side. He doesn't even remember taking it from the boat.

Another hundred yards on and both of them stop.

Before them two saplings stand arched over the path, their upper reaches lashed to form a makeshift arbor. The skulls of small animals and fish dangle from the branches on lengths of fishing line, a crop of cruel ornaments trembling in the breeze. Their hollow sockets sway this way, that way, guarding the path before them. Hunter reaches up to touch one — a raccoon's skull maybe, or a large gray squirrel — then doesn't. When he looks down again, Lawton has a gun."
— *The River of Kings*, p. 280

We did, too. A tiny .22-caliber revolver. Because we were fearless and dumb (there is a reason why boys this age are sent to fight wars), we explored the shed we found. It was empty, thank God. But the question of what it was there for, and why its owners had tried so hard to ward us away, has always haunted me. That mystery became the seed that would birth *The River of Kings*.

I wrote it as a short story first, "Riverkeepers," which was published in *Chautauqua*, edited by graduate students from Wilmington's own UNCW Creative Writing program. But the story felt bigger than a mere 17 pages. Here was a river with its own mythology, complete with conquistadors and highlanders, 7-foot alligator gar and catfish the size of mermaids. A river rumored to harbor a sea monster not unlike the one in Loch Ness, reported since earliest times:

"A creature trapped here, perhaps, when the prehistoric seas receded. Probably just a line of sturgeon surfacing — only that — but their father believed it something more. He believed the stories of the old-time timbermen, who described a thing darker, more sinister.

"Ridge-backed." His broke-knuckled hand cruised before their boyhood eyes. "Got a head like a Tyrannosaur, teeth like one, too. Flippers the size of ship's oars. Swims like a dolphin, up and down. Got a body round and strong as them cypress trunks they sent streaming down the canals."

Hunter looks at the trees along the riverbanks. There is hardly any of that old-growth timber left now, a few ancient survivors that pose for photographs, a centuries-old myth trolling the waters they once guarded." — *The River of Kings*, p. 17

Yes, here was a river that had aborted the deforestation of the state, carrying timber rafts the size of basketball courts down to the coastal sawmills. A river endangered itself by pulp mills and nuclear power plants. A river as beautiful and wild and savage as anything left on this Earth.

Here was a book.

I began, and so did a number of research trips with men I regard as my brothers. Whit Dawson, Taylor Davis, and the photographer Ben Galland (*Island Time* and *Island Passages*). These are friends I have known since elementary school, who were there on those early paddle trips, and whose love of the river is undiminished. We

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM TAYLOR BROWN

Lewis Island

would search the river for landmarks I was writing into the book, visiting Alligator Congress and Rifle Cut and Stud Horse Creek. We would witness what we thought for one surreal moment to be the Altamaha-ha herself — and which, in fact, turned out to be nearly as strange: a large feral hog swimming across the river. We would be trapped far upriver by a grounded boat and have to navigate the night river with nothing but flashlights, watching the bright jewels of alligator eyes burn along the banks. We would search the river for narrow-gauge rails and ancient logging equipment and thousand-year-old virgin cypress.

"They round a spiky thicket of palmetto and before them a stony colossus roars skyward from the earth, a cypress as giant-footed as a house, the root base knuckled and tapered like ten trunks grown all into a single primeval missile. Woody stalagmites, man-tall, stand like cloaked old guards on every side, and a dark cloud of big-eared vesper bats may or may not be hanging asleep in the tree's hollows." — *The River of Kings*, p. 88

But something was missing, or perhaps waiting to be found. I would discover it in the form of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgue, a French botanical painter who accompanied the 1564 expedition to found the Huguenot settlement of Fort Caroline — the first permanent European fort in what would become the modern-day United States, predating St. Augustine by one year and Jamestown by four decades. Le Moyne ("The Monk") would be the first European artist to capture the flora, fauna and — most intriguingly — the natives of this New World.

"They waded ashore to greet the natives, the iron barrels of their arquebuses marching like organ pipes, their swords banging against their legs. The surf exploding against their knees. The natives waited on the beach with round eyes, white as bone, and Le Moyne could smell them as he neared: an animal musk, smoky and wild. They surrounded the white men in twitching rings, their limbs long and powerful, their skin queered with inks and mazelike designs. They had long fingernails, sharpened into claws, their ears yoked with inflated fish bladders. Their eyes darted about, quick as baitfish. Like children they reached out, shyly, their brown fingers seeking the godlike torsos of the landing party's armor, the long black beards that pointed their chins." — *The River of Kings*, p. 9

The events at Fort Caroline are touched by mystery, gleaned as they are from the written narratives of those involved, the facts of which are perplexing, even contradictory. But one thing is now certain: The fort was not located on the St. Johns River near modern-day Jacksonville, Florida, as scholars so long believed. It was, more likely, built at the mouth of the Altamaha River. Friends of mine have looked for Fort Caroline themselves, studying satellite maps for a ghostly triangle of newer-growth trees — indicating the outline of a fort — and finding one.

I would weave in the story of Fort Caroline with that of the brothers, braiding together story lines spaced more than five centuries apart. I based many of the historical chapters on scenes from Le Moyne's own work. After completing the manuscript, I needed to find a Renaissance French scholar to check my phrasing and usage.

Christopher Rhodes — my incredible agent and friend — put me in touch with Dr. Scott Juall, associate professor of French at UNCW. Here is where destiny seemed to intervene. As it turned out, Juall had just returned from Paris, where he had presented on the travel narratives of Le Moyne and other characters from the novel. Jacques Le

ENGRAVINGS FROM THE FLORIDA CENTER FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Moyne and the French experience at Fort Caroline are studied by a mere *handful* of scholars — I'd had no idea that one of them lived in Wilmington!

Today, our connection feels fated, but at the time, I was coated in a nervous sweat. What would this scholar, who had dedicated himself to the study of early modern European travel narratives, think of my fictional interpretation of the material on which his career was built? What glaring errors would he uncover, gutting my manuscript like that gar in the woods?

The answer would come in late March of last year. I had been on tour with my first book, *Fallen Land*, a Civil War-era novel, for nearly three months, a barrage of readings and interviews and appearances — all while writing the first draft of a new book and running the wholly separate business that pays my bills. I was run ragged, harried, living close to my bones. I was changing clothes in a gas station parking lot on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill, manuscript in hand, prepping to meet my editor in person for the first time. The glorious life of a novelist.

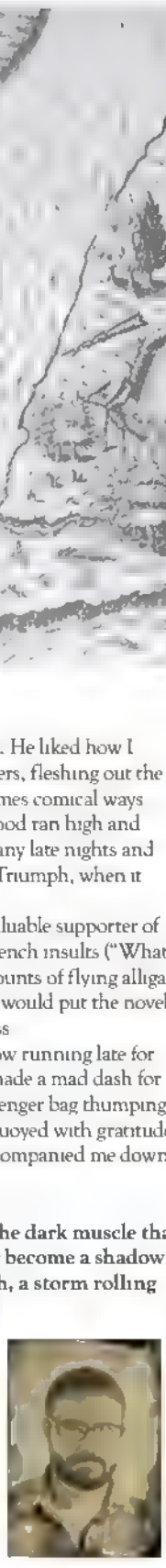
Then the email from Juall arrived. He had just finished reading the French chapters of the novel. He found them excellent, he said. He liked how I had imagined the attitudes and dialogue of the characters, fleshing out the insights from the narratives in provocative and sometimes comical ways.

Relief hit me like a flood; I was almost giddy. My blood ran high and bright. So many months of work go into a novel. So many late nights and early mornings, so many hours of doubt and sacrifice. Triumph, when it comes, is sweet.

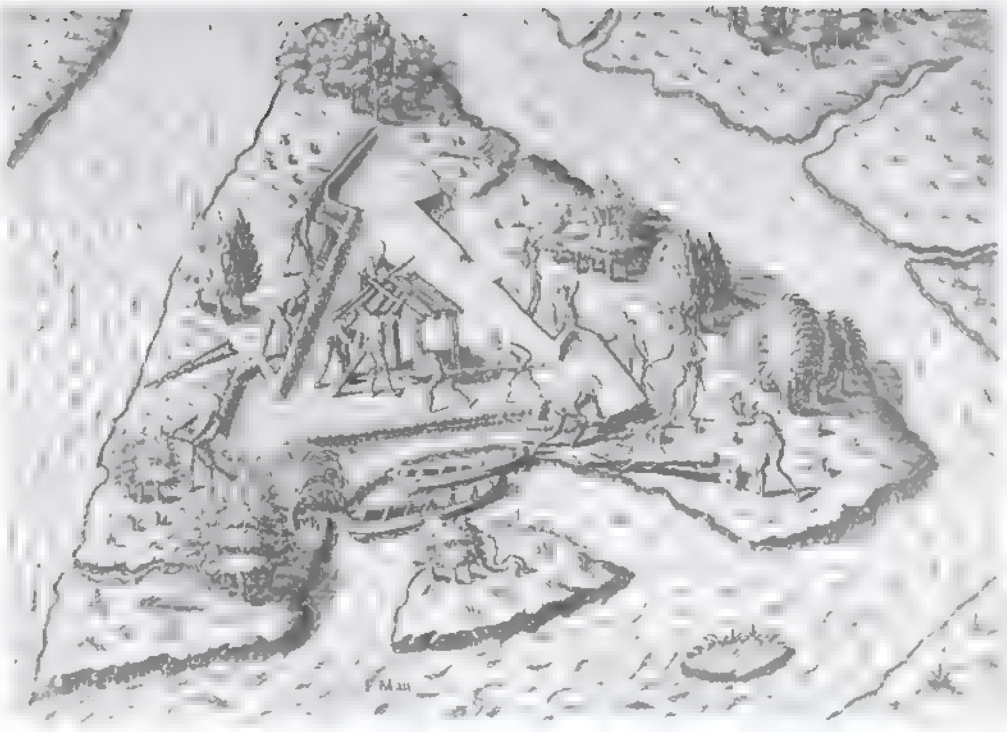
Over the coming months, Juall would prove an invaluable supporter of the book. He would instruct me on Renaissance-era French insults ("What weak testicles") and direct me toward 16th century accounts of flying alligators and sea monsters witnessed by early explorers. He would put the novel on his syllabus and invite me to guest-lecture to his class.

But all that was to come. On this morning, I was now running late for brunch with my editor. I parked down the street and made a mad dash for Crook's Corner, breathless with anticipation, my messenger bag thumping against my back. I was propelled as by the river itself, buoyed with gratitude for those brothers, both real and written, who have accompanied me down such strange and wondrous paths.

"They slide their boats into the water, finding the dark muscle that pulls them along, and Hunter watches his brother become a shadow of himself in the mist, amorphous as story or myth, a storm rolling slowly downstream." — *The River of Kings*, p. 119



Taylor Brown grew up on the Georgia coast. He is the recipient of the Montana Prize in Fiction. His first book, Fallen Land, *was excerpted in* Salt *last winter. His second book,* The River of Kings, *is forthcoming from St. Martin's Press this March. He lives and writes in Wilmington. www.taylorbrownfiction.com*



Fort Caroline

Modern Family

A home with an eye on the horizon

By Isabel Zermani • Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

The South End of Wrightsville Beach is taking on a new, youthful character, something slightly less blue blood, with a spirited pioneering air, the same one that sweeps the island's naked end to shape the dunes. It's a great place to explore, shell hunt and windsurf; just ask the Andrews family. Their modern home on the tip of the South End is built to integrate both their lifestyle and the environment.

Dr. Hiroshi and Amy Andrews came to Wilmington seven years ago by way of "D.C., Korea, D.C., and Fort Gordon, Georgia," says Amy. But first, "We met at Penn." A Harvard University alum, Hiroshi was then in medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, and Amy was an undergrad on her way to becoming an ICU nurse. "We were in debt up to our eyeballs," Amy says with a laugh. "Then my husband took this military position."

The travel began; some places were better than others.

An avid windsurfer and paddle-boarder, Hiroshi couldn't always walk out his front door to catch waves. "The years he spent dragging his stuff an hour from D.C. to some crappy beach in Baltimore — he's earned it!" says Amy while touring Hiroshi's gear collection on the ground level. The windsurfing sails are hung from ceiling hooks like colorful bats in this man cave, but living at the beach was truly a family dream. When the job opportunity in Wilmington arrived, they jumped on it and moved near the hospital, but "we were always coming to the beach."

They got a plan.

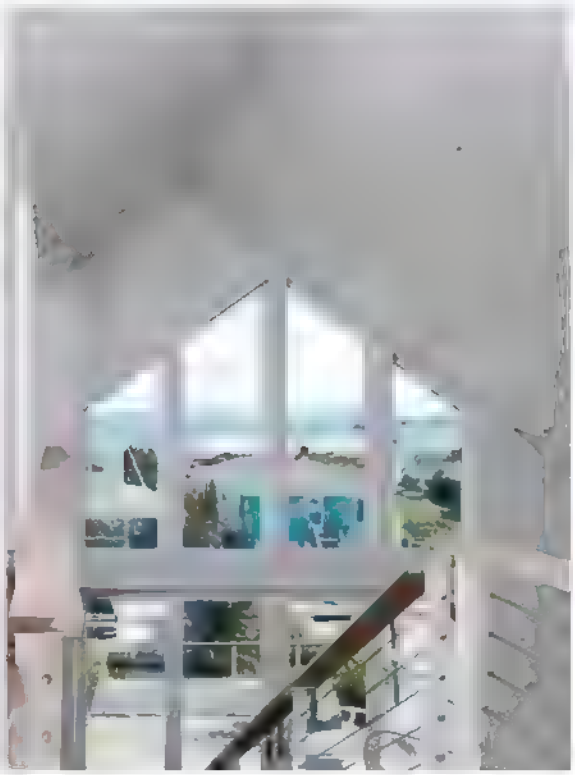
"Building the house was the 10–15 year plan, then the five–10 year plan. . . then the now plan," remembers Amy.

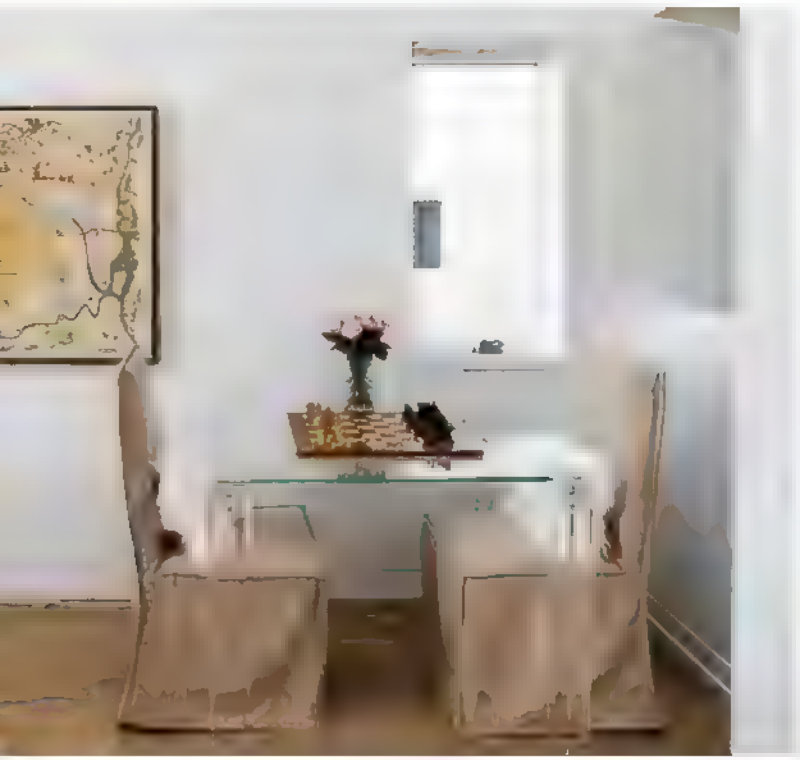
It's not an exaggeration to say this house was built around ocean views. The open concept living space is two stories tall with an east wall that's mostly glass. The cathedral-like windows come to a point, worshipfully framing the Atlantic rolling over the jetty. Amy wanted to see water at all times, as "close to being outside as possible," but "we didn't realize we'd have such great views." The architect, John Parker, remembers being stunned too: "Gosh, Amy, I feel like I'm in church."

Or perhaps, the world's nicest yoga studio.

Upstairs, in the open loft above the living room, is "the yoga spot," points out Amy, a yoga teacher for the last five years. The loft's glass doors slide open to a deck with uninterrupted views — pier to jetty — that is the warm weather yoga spot. There are three levels of decks, making the outdoor living space nearly as high a priority as the indoor, and not just for their Labradoodle, Harry Potter. In the original plans, a four-story outdoor spiral staircase connected each deck, but during construction, it was ruled out, keeping each deck level somewhat private.

Changes happen during construction. The two-year build of this home (one year planning, one year building) felt "the way it used to be" for Parker, with client, builder Ralph Konrady, and architect "all together, on the ground." The position of the staircase in the living room was reconfigured to hug the wall, not be a centerpiece, and an upstairs storage closet became an extra bathroom. How you want your house is driven by how you live, not the other way around, at least not for Parker, who is now designing his third





house on the South End. He doesn't have a signature, but if he did, it might be the facing windows wrapping the southeast corner, maximizing those South End views. First star to the right and straight on till Masonboro. .

Eastern thought influenced both the design and furnishing of their home. "I wanted basically no furniture, all built-ins. White. Light wood. The less stuff, the better," says Amy. It could be Amy's yogic ways, Hiroshi's Japanese heritage, or all the moving that comes with military service that instilled a love of simplicity, but the result is cerebrally soothing. The Zen of the limited palate. "It was a running joke when building the house; the guys would ask, 'What color will this be?' White. Always white."

White modernism can be severe, this home is softened in skillful ways. The lighting fixtures in the kitchen and dining room offer warm white and organic forms. The kitchen tile — a much-wrought-over choice — recalls the natural sheer of shells, adding depth. The brushed finish of fixtures throughout the house keeps the linear forms light and soft. The dining room chairs, though still white, "are one of the few things from the old house," says Amy, "and they add a little texture." Interior design-wise, Amy is quick to mention Big Sky Design, but also, "I have a tendency to go my own way."

On the other end, one of the main traditional elements of the house is the gabled roof. (The south side is covered in solar panels.) Though initially drawn to John Parker by his design of a very modern house five doors down, the Andrewses wanted "a blend" of modern and traditional, "especially on the outside."

We often think of building as being from the ground up, but starting at the top has its benefits. Parker worked the ceilings into the gabled roofline, creating an even greater sense of space by the vertical wood covering on the ceiling. The almost-invisible cable railings on the stairs and loft subtly interplay with the ceiling; the cable's linear stripes mirror the plank seams.

An unlikely centerpiece to the room was also driven by views — the elevator. Parker explained that Amy had wanted an open concept, but some privacy in the kitchen. "I make a mess in my kitchen. I have four kids!" she chimed in on the topic. Once they were in the space, it was different; the eyeline from the sink didn't have an ocean view. Parker recalls Amy arriving at the solution: "'How about a glass elevator?' She came up with it. It's more or less custom-made." They found a commercial company that could do it and preserve those views. You even get the view of the inner mechanics of the elevator, reminiscent of a bank vault.

Amy's favorite view? It's from the square Japanese soaking tub in the master bath. "The sun sets right there." Amy points through an already picturesque view of the quiet sound with swaying grasses. (Even as the South End builds up, this view will likely remain, as their back neighbor is the one-story Coast Guard building.)

Connecting the master bedroom and bath is what Parker calls "a walk-through" closet, not a walk-in. The lots on Wrightsville Beach are narrow, he explains, which calls for creative carving of the space. It's a hallway of built-in cabinets in a modern finish. "It conceals everything," say Amy with delight.

The master bedroom has built-ins, too, keeping the consistent, polished look. Above the bed hangs an expressive nude by local painter Jay Edge. When the Andrewses deviate from concentrated calm, it's with good reason. "I only put something on the wall when it means something to me," says Amy. The Chip Hemingway landscape painting of the South End from the inlet holds court in the dining room, and the living room chess nook features an antique map of Kyoto, Japan, where Hiroshi was born.

Downstairs on the first floor are the children's and guest bedrooms, as well as a playroom that opens out to the backyard, previously home to a half-pipe, currently home to the soccer field, and soon home to a pool. "Here's my fake grass!" Amy says cheerfully. "No chemicals, no water." This is an eco-friendly soccer field. Next door is an empty lot for when the three boys want to play full court. Their eldest child is a daughter with artistic, environmental and sustainability interests, as demonstrated by her brightly colored room and cow paintings — she's vegan. The family has a "plant based diet," which Hiroshi, as a gastroenterologist, also supports. In the driveway is a Tesla. The Andrewses are thinking about the future.

The Andrews family have been in their dream-house-turned-now-house exactly one year and the gratitude has not worn off.

"We never take it for granted," says Amy; she wears a white tank top with metallic letters that say: Work your ❤ Out. "We use the beach. We walk and pick up trash all year long." With four kids, they can probably cover some real ground.

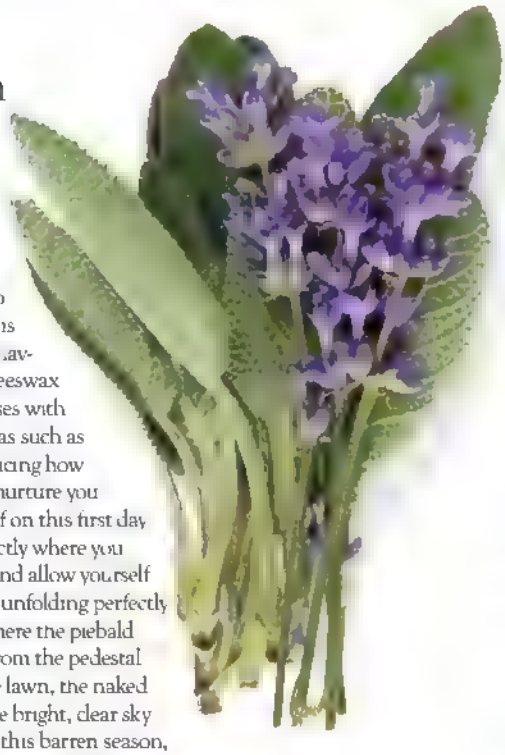
ALMANAC

January

By Ash Alder

What a severe yet master artist old Winter is . . .
No longer the canvas and the pigments, but
the marble and the chisel.
– John Burroughs, "The Snow-Walkers"

Begin Again



In many cultures, the first day of the year is considered to be a sacred time of spiritual rebirth and good fortune – a time to cleanse the soul and reopen one's mind to the notion that anything is possible. Draw yourself a lavender salt bath. Light a beeswax candle. Indulge your senses with woodsy and earthy aromas such as cedarwood and sage, noticing how they recharge, calm and nurture you.

Be gentle with yourself on this first day of January. Celebrate exactly where you are – in this moment – and allow yourself to imagine the New Year unfolding perfectly. Look out the window, where the piebald gypsy cat drinks slowly from the pedestal birdbath. Notice the bare lawn, the naked branches stark against the bright, clear sky. Experience the beauty of this barren season, of being open and willing to receive infinite blessings. There's nothing to do but breathe and trust life.

Breathe and trust life

Speaking of Twelfth Night (January 5), the eve of Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas season and commemorates the arrival of the Magi, who honored the Infant Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Indeed it is a night of merrymaking and reverie. That said, if you're seeking a hangover cure come Epiphany (January 6), ginger tea is an excellent and delicious home remedy.

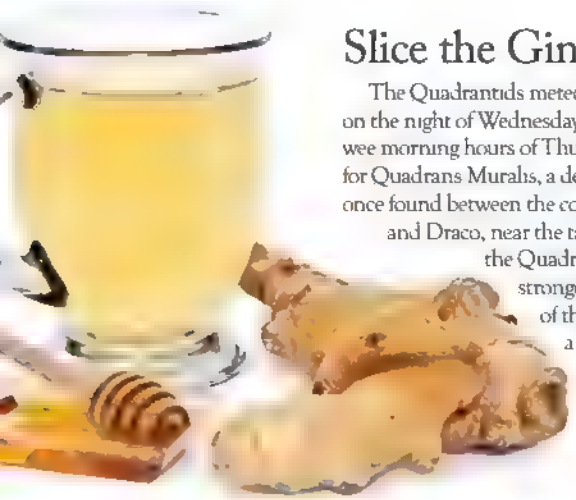
Here's what you'll need:

4–6 thin slices raw ginger (more if you like a tea that bites)
1 1/2–2 cups water
Juice from 1/2 lime, or to taste
1–2 tablespoons honey or agave nectar (optional)

And here's what you'll need to do:

Boil ginger in water for no less than 10 minutes. You really can't over do it, so load up on ginger and simmer to your heart's content.
Remove from heat; add lime juice and honey or nectar.
Sip slowly and allow your world to recalibrate.

Mercury shifts from retrograde to direct on Sunday, January 8. It's time to take action. Plant the tree. Tackle your garden to-do list. And since Saturday, January 28, marks the celebration of the Chinese New Year of the Fire Rooster, a little advice from the bird: Be bold; live loud, don't hold back.

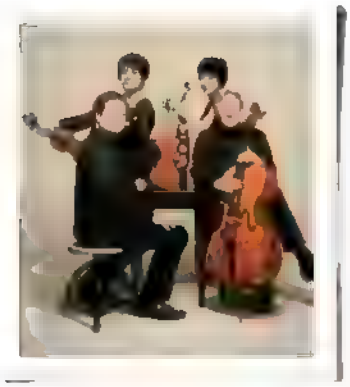


Slice the Ginger

The Quadrantids meteor shower will peak on the night of Wednesday, January 4, until the wee morning hours of Thursday, Jan. 5. Named for Quadrans Muralis, a defunct constellation once found between the constellations of Boötes and Draco, near the tail of Ursa Major, the Quadrantids is one of the strongest meteor showers of the year. Thankfully, a first quarter moon will make for good viewing conditions.

The days are short
The sun a spark
Hung thin between
The dark and dark.
– John Updike, "January,"
A Child's Calendar

Arts Calendar



Michael D'Angelo Quartet

1/12

Courtyards & Cobblestones

1/14-15

Precious Metal Show & Sale

1/22

January 2017

1/1 Wrightsville Plunge

12 p.m. Annual run that includes a dip in the chilly Atlantic Ocean, plus music, refreshments, competitions and more. Admission: $10–25. Proceeds benefit Communities in Schools of Cape Fear. Crystal Pier, Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 343-1901 or www.crowdrise.com/WrightsvillePlunge.

1/2 Story Time

10:30 a.m. Join the Wilmington Railroad Museum for story time featuring costumed volunteers reading aloud about trains. Admission: $5. Wilmington Railroad Museum, 505 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-2634 or www.wrrm.org.

1/5–8 Art of the Bloom

Thursday preview party, 7–9 p.m. Friday–Sunday, all day. A weekend of blooming glory, professional floral designers created arrangements inspired by art on loan from the Cameron Art Museum. Culinary delights also available. Benefitting the CAM and New Hanover Garden Club. Admission: $35–45 all weekend, or $10–15 per day for members and non-members. Tickets available at the event location, the Blockade Runner Beach Resort, Wrightsville Beach. Call 910-256-2251 or buy online at www.cameronartmuseum.org.

1/7 Garden Program

2 p.m. Four Seasons of the Southern Garden: Containers. Master gardener Dawn Betts discusses how to plant, water and fertilize plants in containers of every size and sort. Admission: Free. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6371 or www.nhclibrary.org.

1/9 Hidden Battleship

12–4:30 p.m. Behind-the-scenes tour of the un-restored area of the battleship. Admission: $45–50. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

1/12 Jazz at the CAM

6:30–8 p.m. Jazz at the CAM presents Michael D'Angelo Quartet featuring Chad Eby and Evan Ringel performing a mix of standard and original work. Admission: $10–12. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

1/13 StriperFest

6 p.m. Auction and Banquet (Friday); 9 a.m. Tournament/Education Day (Saturday). Bid on vacation and local restaurant packages, boating equipment and art while enjoying dinner, drinks and live music. Saturday includes a one-of-a-kind tag and release Striped Bass Fishing Tournament and Education Day. Admission: $60. Coastline Convention Center, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-5606 or www.capefearriverwatch.org.

1/14 Battle of Fort Fisher Anniversary

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. In remembrance of the 152nd Anniversary of the 2nd Battle of Fort Fisher, the Friends of Fort Fisher will host a one-day living history event includes periodic cannon firings, special tours, lectures, kids' activities, and dozens of Union and Confederate reenactors. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher State Historic Site, 1610 Fort Fisher Boulevard South, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-5538 or website.

1/14–15 Home Expo

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday), 12–4 p.m. (Sunday). The area's largest home improvement and remodeling expo featuring more than eighty exhibits on sustainable living, landscaping, hurricane protection and more. Admission: Free. CFCC Schwartz Center, 609 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: www.wcfhba.com/wilmington-homeexpo-remodeling-show.

Wine & Chocolate Festival

2/3-5

Chamber Music Concert

2/19

Cinderella Live

2/28

1/14 & 15 Courtyards & Cobblestones
4–8 p.m. (Saturday), 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Sunday). A creative wedding event that features seven fully styled venues and a handpicked collection of the most innovative, creative wedding professionals from Southeastern North Carolina. Admission $35. Various venues in downtown Wilmington. Info: www.courtyardandcobblestones.com.

1/20–22 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Friday), 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market filled with upcycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home decor items, salvage pieces perfect for DIY projects, yard and garden décor, jewelry and local honey. Admission Free. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway (Hwy 74/76), Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

1/20–22 Youth Theatre
7:30 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association Youth Theatre presents *The Little Mermaid* based on the Hans Christian Anderson story. Also runs 1/27–29. Admission, $12. Hannah Block Second Street Stage, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.thalian.org.

1/21 Cold Stroke Classic
9 a.m. Annual SUP competition hosted by Coastal Urge. Paddlers can opt for a 3.5-mile recreational course or a 7-mile elite course. Cash prizes awarded to top finishers. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-7112 or coldstrokeclassic.com.

1/21 Listen Up Brunswick County
7:30 p.m. Singer/songwriter Joe Crookston, the 2016 Folk Alliance International Artist in Residence performs live. Admission $20. BCCC, Odell Williamson Auditorium, 50 College Road NW, Bolivia. Info: (860) 485-3354 or www.bccowa.com.

1/22 Beethoven 15K/5K
9 a.m. 15K & 5K race over paved running trails, boardwalk and lake in Brunswick Forest. A post-race party and awards ceremony will take place in the fitness center featuring food, drinks, music, prize drawings and a costume contest. Admission: $35–45. Proceeds benefit the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra. Brunswick Forest, 2701 Brunswick Forest Parkway, Leland. Info: www.wilmingtonsymphony.org/beethoven-15k5k.html.

1/22 Precious Metal
12–6 p.m. Precious metal show and sale presented by Cicada Metals and Jonkheer Jewelry Art Studio featuring handcrafted jewelry and sculpture by the region's most talented artists. Admission includes a raffle ticket. Admission $5. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

1/25 Winter Wine & Beer Walk
1–6 p.m. Self-guided biannual tour of downtown Wilmington's finest popular restaurants and bars. Guests will receive two free samples at each location. Admission, $16. Throne Theater, 208 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (216) 374-8884 or wineandbeerwalk.com.

1/26 Improv Comedy Theater
7:30 p.m. The Second City Hits Home. Chicago sketch and improv comedy theater featuring set pieces, songs and improvisation about Wilmington as well as material from the famed Second City archives. Admission $20–50. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/presents/second_city.html.

1/26–29 East Coast Shag Classic
Annual beach music and shag festival held at Wrightsville Beach. Enjoy concerts by Jim Quick & the Coastline Band, the Entertainers, Steve Owens & Summertime and Band of Oz, plus shag and line dancing lessons, a silent auction, social hour mixer, and the Gospel Train. Proceeds benefit Hope Abounds. Holiday Inn Resort, 1706 North Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Info: eastcoastshagclassic.com

1/27 Fourth Friday
6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

1/27–29 Antique Show & Sale
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Sunday). Shop a variety of antiques and vintage items from more than 35 vendors from 10 states. Includes furniture, jewelry, silver, crystal and linens. Several restoration specialists will be on-site a silent auction will be held. Admission: $8. Proceeds benefit community charities and projects. Coastline Convention Center, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (800) 617 7732 or www.wilmingtonantiqueshow.com

1/28 Sip, Swap & Shop
6–10 p.m. Gala/fundraiser hosted by Lump to Laughter featuring a swap party, drinks and hors d'oeuvres, raffles and silent and live auctions. Admission: $75. The Terraces on Sir Tyler, 1826 Sir Tyler Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.lumptolaughter.org.

1/28 AIW Awards Evening
6–9 p.m. Join in for the first year of Arts In Wilmington awards honoring individuals, organizations and educators essential to our art community. Chosen by a panel of experts throughout the south, these recipients will be honored in a ceremony. More info at www.ArtsInWilmington.com. Admission: $25. The Artworks, 200 Willard Street, Wilmington. Tickets online at AIWAwards.EventBrite.com.

1/28 NHRMC Founders' Gala
Join the New Hanover Regional Medical Center Foundation for a night of food, fun, live music and dancing at their annual black-tie fundraising gala. Proceeds support the Betty H. Cameron Women's & Children's Hospital at NHRMC. Air Wilmington Hangar, 1817 Aviation Road, Wilmington. Info: www.nhrmc.org/nhrmc-foundation/get-involved/special-events/founders-gala

1/28 Music on Market
7:30 p.m. A Symphony of Bells. St. Andrews' handbell choir performs live including various music from Coldplay, Mozart and *Shrek*. St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1416 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-9693 or www.musiconmarket.org.

1/29 Pied Piper Theatre
3 p.m. Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. and the Junior League of Wilmington, Inc. present *The Adventures of Bonnie Reed, Queen of the Pirate Ants*, a musical for New Hanover County children. Admission: $10. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

1/29 Chamber Music Concert
7:30 p.m. Chamber Music Wilmington presents Amit Peled's Homage to Pablo Casals. Admission: $45. UNCW Beckwith Recital Hall, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1079 or www.hambermusicwilmington.org.

1/30 & 31 Model Railroad Show & Sale
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday), 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Sunday). Cape Fear Model Railroad Society's annual show and sale with free clinics on interactive operating layouts. Admission: $3–5. American Legion Post 10, 702 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington. www.capefearmodelrailroadclub.org.

February 2017

2/1 Musical Theater
7:30 p.m. The quintessential backstage musical comedy classic, *42nd Street* is the song and dance fable of Broadway with an American dream story and some of the greatest hit songs ever written. Admission: $46–95. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362 7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/42nd-street

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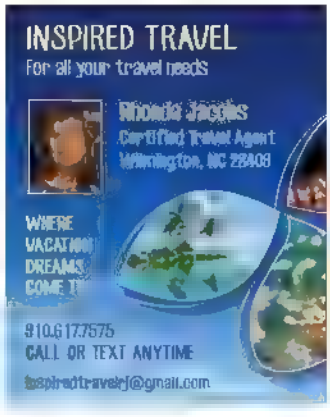

Salt Services
To advertise your product or service on the Salt Services page call 910.691.8293.
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Wilmington Symphony Orchestra
Symphony Pops!
Linda Lavin & Friends
Saturday, February 11
7:30 pm, Wilson Center
TICKETS:
910-362-7999
WilmingtonSymphony.org

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(910) 538-2939 WWW.BROOKLYNARTSNC.COM | VENDOR INFO Contact Rebecca@BrooklynArtsNC.com

Photos of Hope Series

2/24

2/2–4 NC Jazz Festival

7:30 p.m. Largest traditional jazz festival in the southeast. Thursday includes styles of jazz with Jazz a.k.a Trinidad by Sea Pans, Nnenna Freelon Trio, and Professor Cunningham's Traditional Jazz Jam. On Friday & Saturday, 14 All-Star musicians will deliver traditional sets, all with a different leader. On Sunday patrons are treated to a musical brunch with All-star musicians followed by a chance to jam along with them. Admission: $15–225. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 793-1111 or ncjazzfestival.com.

2/3 Soul Concert

8 p.m. Enjoy a great night of '70s soul with soul balladeers The Stylistics, Peaches & Herb, and Eddie Holman. Admission: $32.50–59.50. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or wcfcc.edu/capefearstage/the-stylistics.

2/3–5 Wine & Chocolate Festival

7–10 p.m. (Friday); 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Saturday); 12–4 p.m. (Sunday). Annual festival featuring a Friday night Grand Tasting with hors d'oeuvres, food and wine sampling, beer and cigar bar, live entertainment, artisan exhibits and a marketplace preview. Saturday & Sunday features the marketplace, a tasting tour of the best Carolina wineries' sweet sensations from the region's signature chocolatiers, plus demos, raffles and entertainment on the riverfront. Coastline Conference & Event Center, 503 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 742-0120 or wilmingtonwineandchocolatefestival.com.

2/9 Jazz at the CAM

6:30–8 p.m. Jazz at the CAM presents MW Voices featuring Jerald Shynett leading a group focused on the voice with several vocalists and an array of musicians. Admission: $10–12. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

2/9 Dance

7:30 p.m. Camille Brown and Dancers perform MR TOLE RAncE. Through comedy, animation, theater, and live music by Scott Patterson, the troupe celebrates African-American humor, examines "the mask" of survival and the "double consciousness" of the black performer throughout history. Admission: $15–40. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/presents/camille_brown.html.

2/9 NC Symphony Concert

7:30 p.m. Scheherazade. The NC Symphony performs Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture," Timo Andres' "Everything Happens So Much" and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade." Pre-concert talk with Dr. Barry Salwen of UNCW at 6:30 p.m. Admission: $18–57. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage.

2/9–19 Live Theatre

7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). *They're Playing Our Song*. Funny, romantic show about an established composer and his relationship with an aspiring young female lyricist. Professionally, their relationship works beautifully but ultimately leads to conflict on the home front. Admission: $15–30. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

2/10 Paula Poundstone Live

8 p.m. American stand-up comedian, author, actress, interviewer and commentator Paula Poundstone performs live. Admission: $28–50. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/paula-poundstone.

2/11 Symphony Pops!
7:30 p.m. Award-winning star of film, tv and stage, Linda Lavin and the Wilmington Symphony Pops brings an unforgettable evening of American jazz and cabaret. Admission: $40–65. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage

2/11 Valentine 10K
9 a.m. 10K that leads runners under the Wrightsville Beach drawbridge, over the Causeway, and alongside Banks Channel. Wear red, white and pink. Admission: $30–40. Proceeds benefit Wrightsville Beach Parks & Recreation events. Wrightsville Beach Park, 321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: its-go-time.com/wbvalentine10k.

2/11 Battleship Program
12–5:30 p.m. Power Plant. In-depth, program on the battleship's power plant featuring classroom presentations and a behind-the-scenes tour of engineering spaces. Admission: $60–65. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

2/13 I Heart Fashion Benefit
6:30 p.m. More than 20 models will walk the runway to showcase the latest styles from boutiques and shops in the Wilmington area for a great cause. Admission: $35. Proceeds benefit the NHRMC Heart Center. Coastline Conference & Event Center, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: www.nhrmc.org.

2/16 Riverdance
7:30 p.m. Drawing on Irish traditions, the combined talents of the performers propel Irish dancing and music into the present day, capturing the imagination of audiences across all ages and cultures in an innovative and exciting blend of dance, music and song. Admission: $35–75. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage.

2/17–19 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Friday), 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market filled with upcycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home decor items, salvage pieces perfect for DIY projects, yard and garden decor, jewelry and local honey. Admission: Free. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway (Hwy 74/76), Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

2/17–19 Spring Home Show
11 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Friday), 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Saturday), 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Sunday). Annual show for homeowners in all stages of remodeling, landscaping and decorating. View hundreds of exhibits, product demos, interior and exterior vignettes, and seek advice and inspiration from the pros. Admission: Free. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonhomeshow.com.

2/18 Cape Fear Heart Ball
6–11:30 p.m. Annual black-tie fundraiser for the American Heart Association featuring a silent auction and cocktail reception followed by dinner, music, dancing and live auction. Admission: $175. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: capefearheartball.org.

FICTION TO FASHION
NHCPL'S 3RD ANNUAL TEEN FASHION RUNWAY SHOW
THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 23, 7–8 P.M.
@ EXPO 216
216 N. FRONT STREET,
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FREE ADMISSION
CREATIVE TEENS + LIBRARY BOOKS = FICTION TO FASHION
Local creative youth makes runway looks from discarded library books, cassettes, CDs, and *a lot* of ingenuity. It's a Project Runway-style fashion challenge with literary beginnings. See the looks, hear the winners announced, and vote for "Crowd Favorite." We're stepping it up this year with professional hair and makeup by Beauty Bar Boutique and a new venue, EXPO 216.
WANT TO CREATE A LOOK?
Join our team of designers between Jan. 1–31 to get started. Take part in fashion forums, design and hair and make-up consults to help send your best work down the runway. Open to ages 13–18. Sign up at nhclibrary.org or contact Mr. Scooter at 910-798-6393, shayes@nhcgov.com.
Free & Family Friendly
Info at nhclibrary.org
Salt
beauty bar
PUBLIC LIBRARY
EXPO 216

2/18 & 19 — Art for All
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday), 12–5 p.m. (Sunday). Downtown cutting-edge art show and sale featuring more than 50 local artists, food trucks and cash bar. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

2/19 — Listen Up Brunswick County
7:30 p.m. Harpeth Rising performs live blending folk, newgrass, rock and classica. music. Admission $20. BCC Odell Williamson Auditorium, 50 College Road NW, Bolivia. Info: (860) 485-3354 or www.bccowa.com.

2/19 — Chamber Music Concert
7:30 p.m. The Horszowski Piano Trio performs live featuring Grammy-nominated violinist Jesse Mills, frequent CMW guest cellist Raman Ramakrishnan, and concert pianist Rieko Aizawa. The program features Beethoven's Trio Op. 70, No.2, three works by Rebecca Clarke, and Mendelssohn's Trio No. 2 in C Minor. Admission: $30. UNCW Beckwith Recital Hall, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1079 or www.chambermusicwilmington.org.

2/22 — Musical Theater
7:30 p.m. See the high-flying, death defying hit Broadway musical *Pippin* live, full of extraordinary acrobatics, wondrous magical feats and soaring songs. Admission: $40–92. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/pippin-2

2/24 — Fourth Friday
6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

2/24 — Like A Polaroid Picture
6–9 p.m. Photographer Andrew Sherman, a frequent contributor to Salt, exhibits a series of polaroid photography "Into the Dunes" as part of Fourth Fridays Art Walk at ACME Art Studios, 711 N. 5th Street, Wilmington. www.andrewsherman.co

2/24 — Photos of Hope, India
7 p.m. Join the opening reception for the photo series "Girls Thriving: The Homes of Hope Story in India" by local photographer Arrow Ross, best known for his social documentary photography and work with No Boundaries International Art Colony. The series documents the girls' lives diverted from crushing poverty sewing, studying, and learning in "Homes of Hope," orphanages created and supported by local philanthropists, Paul and Tracy Wilkes. Show runs through March 24. CFCC Wilma Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. www.homesofhopeindia.org

2/24 — The Midtown Men Live
7:30 p.m. The original cast members of Broadway's Jersey Boys reunite performing '60s hits with a twist. Admission: $35–75. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/the-midtown-men-2

2/24–26 — Youth Theatre
7:30 p.m. Thalian Association Youth Theatre presents *Really Rosie*, about a smart aleck kid on Brooklyn's Avenue P, acting out show biz fantasies and directing and starring in an Oscar-winning movie. Admission, $12. Hannah Block Second Street Stage, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.thalian.org.

2/25 — Coastal Carolina Cabaret
7 p.m. Mardi gras-themed concert with Al DiMarco, Benny Hill and friends including homemade snacks and deserts, beer, wine and a silent auction. Proceeds benefit Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Scottish Rite Temple, 1415 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6452 or wilmingtonaasrpower.com

2/25 — Music on Market
7:30 p.m. The ECU Afro-Andean World Music Ensemble presents the traditional music of the coastal and highland regions of South America. The Ensemble performs with authentic folk instruments in an evening of Afro-Latin song and dance music. St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1416 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-9693 or musiconmarket.org.

2/26 — Monty's Home Pet Expo
11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Indoor pet expo featuring more than 70 pet-related vendors, rescue booths, silent auction, and a kid's corner filled with games, prizes and interactive learning about pet care. Admission $5. Proceeds benefit Monty's Home canine rescue/prison train-

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ing program as wel. as education and grief support Coastline Conference and Event Center, 503 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 259-7911 or www.montyshome.org/expo/about.

2/26 Michael Bolton Live

7:30 p.m. Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Michael Bolton performs his hits live. Admission $44–122. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/Michael-bolton.

2/28 Musical Theater

7:30 p.m. Enjoy the Tony Award-winning musical Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella* Live. This Broadway production features an incredible orchestra, awe-dropping transformations and all the songs you love. Admission $46–95. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage/Cinderella2.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday – Wednesday Films

7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. Admission $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday Wine Tasting

6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam

8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday T'ai Chi at CAM

12:30–1:30 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday Wednesday Echo

7:30–11:30 p.m. Weekly singer/songwriter open mic night that welcomes all genres of music. Each person will have 3–6 songs. Pa.m Room, 11 East Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-3040.

Thursday Yoga at the CAM

12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

To add a calendar event, please contact saltmagazine.calendar@gmail.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

Legends & Main Attractions Series
THE ADVENTURES OF BONNIE REED
QUEEN OF THE PIRATE ANTS
WRITTEN BY STEVE COOPER
MARCH 7 AT 7:30 PM
CLASSICALLY TRAINED
TENORS
Starring Karen Morgan & Jim Colucci
March 25 at 7:30 pm
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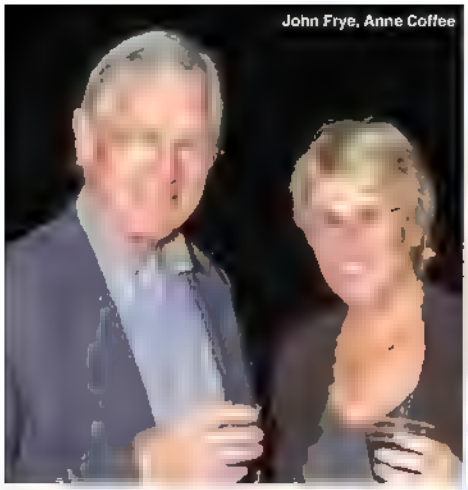
Port City People

3rd Annual Flavor of North Carolina Fall Harvest Fest

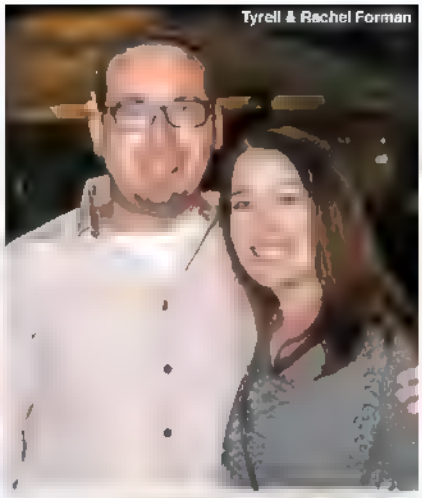
Benefit for the Good Shepherd Center

Saturday, October 29, 2016

Photographs by Bil Ritenour

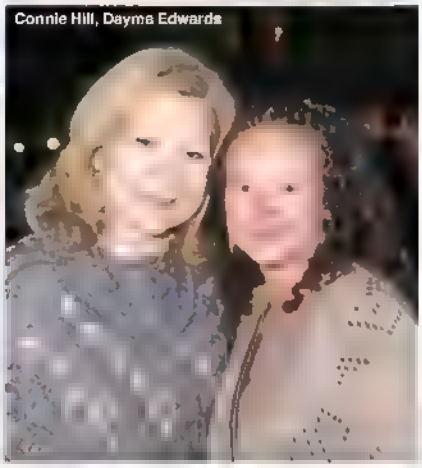

John Frye, Anne Coffee

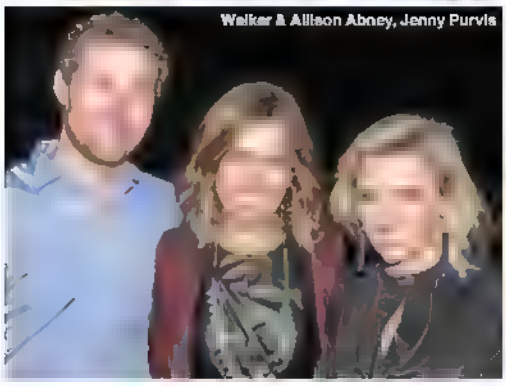
Gary Miller, Meg Davenport, Danelle & Brendon Bastable


Tyrell & Rachel Forman

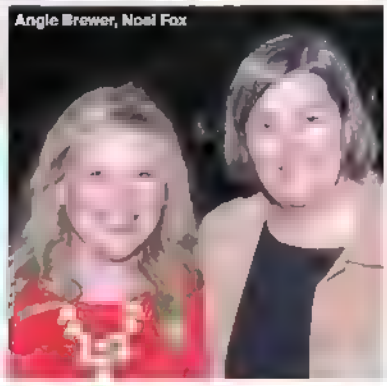
Adrian & Jesse Simpson

Ryal & Laura Taylor, Gray & Tee Nunnalee

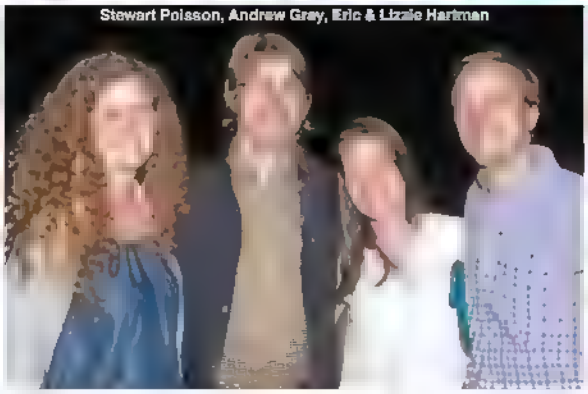

Connie Hill, Dayna Edwards

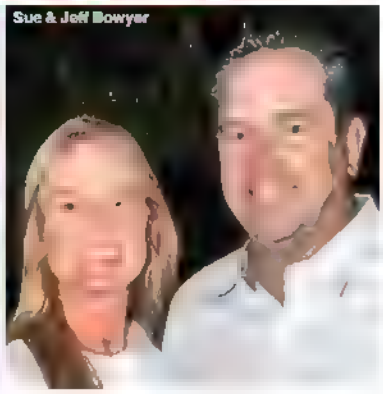

Walker & Allison Abney, Jenny Purvis

Jeremy & Wendy Steele, Jessie & Justin Jeffries


Angie Brewer, Noel Fox

Jessica Whitney, Sheila & Sam Cox


Stewart Poisson, Andrew Gray, Eric & Lizzie Hartman


Sue & Jeff Bowyer

Port City People

11th Annual Wilmington Fur Ball

Union Station Cape Fear Community College

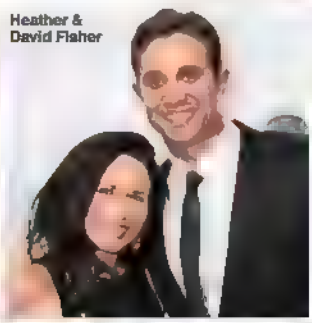
Saturday, November 5, 2016

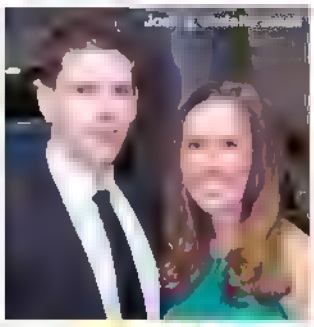
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

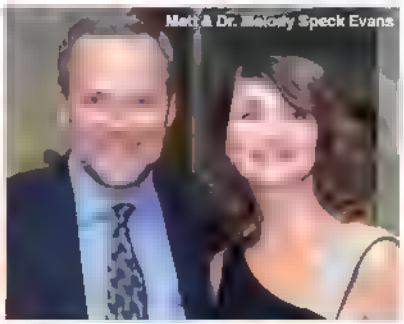
Anita Butler, Barbera Buchanan, Prissy Lineberry, Kari Miller, Anne MacRae

Stephanie & Jim Mayhew

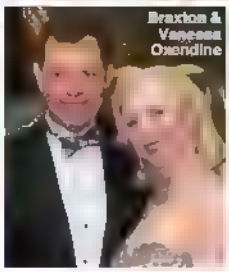
Jason & Carly Forman

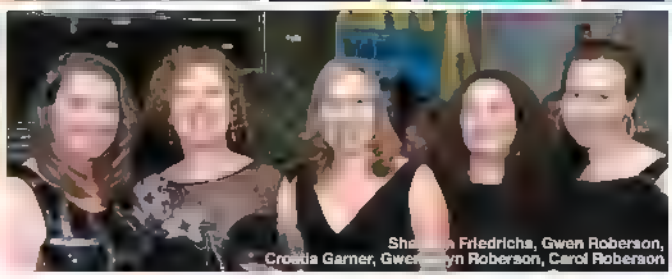

Heather & David Fisher




Matt & Dr. Melody Speck Evans

Dr Barry Herbst Anna Toscano


Braxton & Vanessa Oxendine


Gwen Roberson, Claudia Garner, Carol Roberson

Dr Ron Dye, Fern Bugg

Port City People

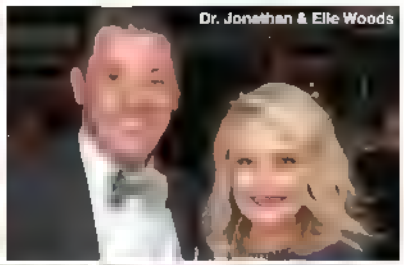
Willie Stargell Foundation Dinner & Auction

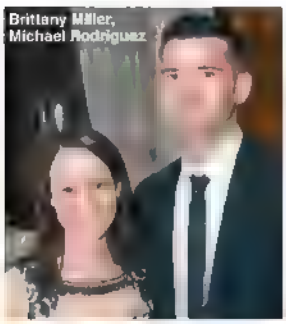
Country Club of Landfall

Saturday, November 5, 2016

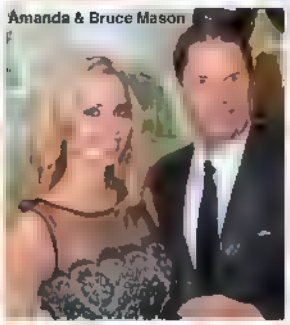
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

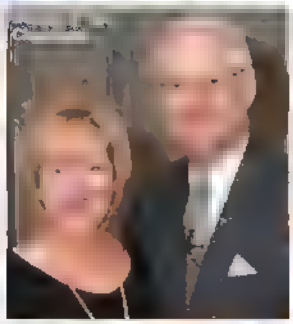
Vanessa Silva, Dana Fisher, Richard Roundtree, Ashley Miller

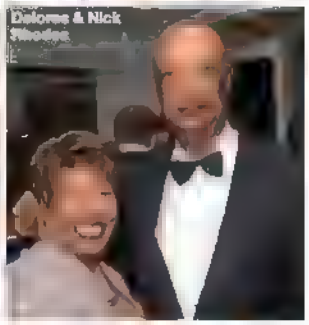

Dr. Jonathan & Elle Woods

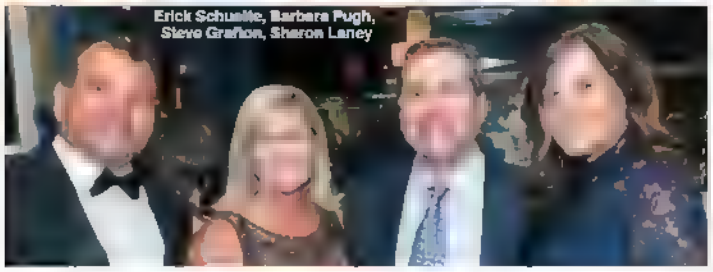

Brittany Miller, Michael Rodriguez

Tim Gardner, Michelle Hackman


Amanda & Bruce Mason




Dalonne & Nick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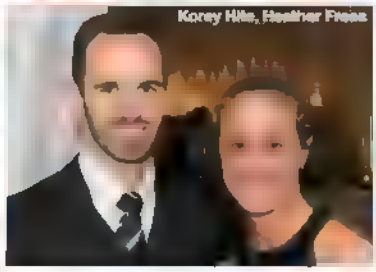
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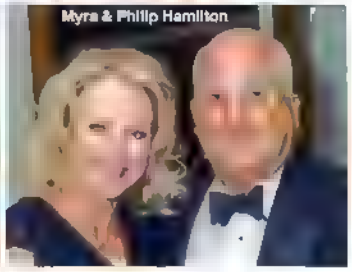

Myra & Philip Hamilton

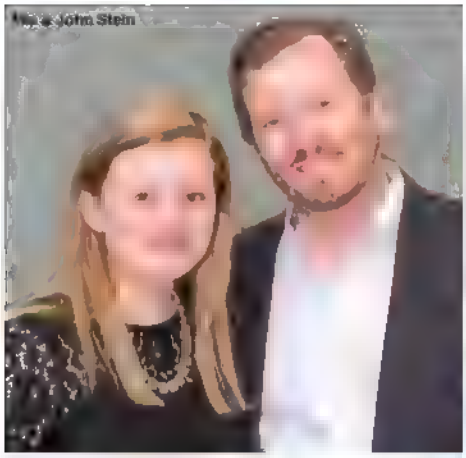
Port City People

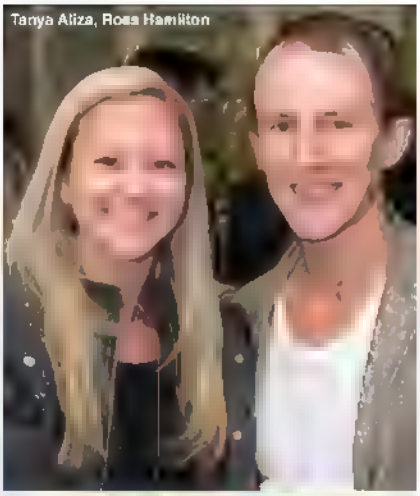
Cucalorus Kickoff Party

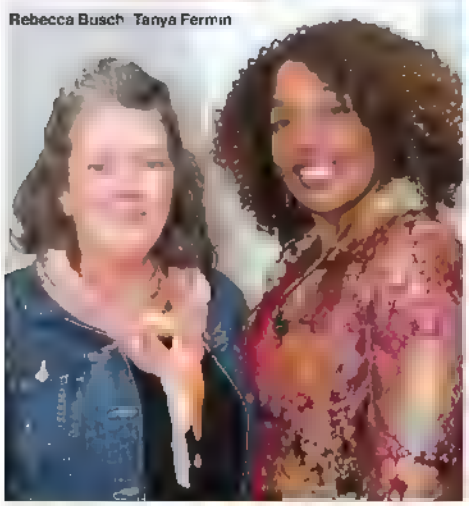
Tek Mountain

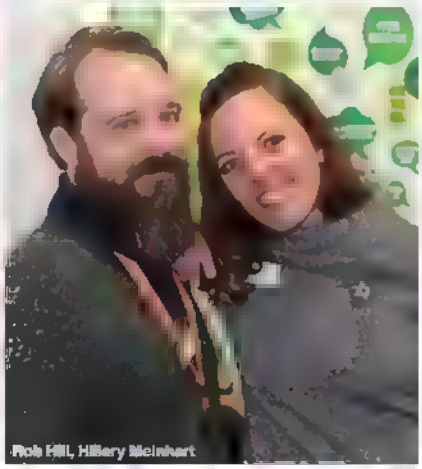
Tuesday, November 8, 2016

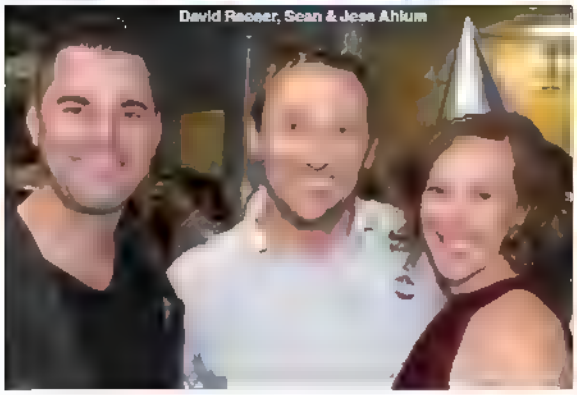
Photographs by Bil. Ritenour

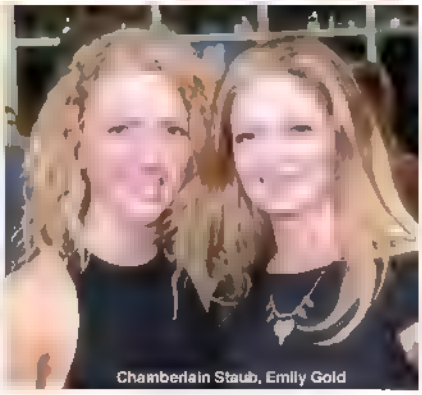












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Sweet Joy Ride

Champange wishes, cavier dreams and the chicken dance

By Astrid Stellanova

Oh, what a good time to be a Capricorn! Money! Fun! Champagne on a beer budget! You bask in the sunshine of a benevolent Universe. And . . . If you don't go broke trolling the racks at Victoria's Secret, you will have one fine time with all things sensual and pleasurable and dee-lightful. Actually, with the Sun in your money house, this is when you bank a lot of cash and good times keep rolling. For the rest of the sun signs, we just hope we are in the back seat for this oh-so-sweet joy ride. Ad Astra – Astrid

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Now, Astrid is not always right about everything, but I'm going to mix my metaphors because I feel oh-so-very right on this star call: If you don't make the best of this astrological joy ride then you sure have missed the bus. Given all the good fortune you enjoy in January, take some time for an attitude of gratitude and pay some of that forward, Birthday Child.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Since the year's end, you've been locked in a dilemma. And Honey, one is right and the other one is you. It won't take you more than a hot minute to figure out for yourself exactly what ole Astrid means. The jury is still out on whether you will get away with something you know was dicey. Not too late to renege, sweet thing, and set it right.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
When things get rough, some of us run and hide. Some, like you, know how to let loose and be hopeful even when they feel the bus tires are bearing down and about to roll over them. They don't feel sorry for themselves – no, baby, they feel a chicken dance coming on. This is the beauty of your true self. Dance that chicken dance, Child.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
If you struck gold, why would you look for brass? Somebody you admire has put that question to you about a choice you made. That choice is going to be one of the most important ones you will make. If you feel you cannot choose, then don't. Sit on your hands. Wait. If your first choice won't fit, don't force it.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
You have the constitution of an ox, and when you get sick, you get mad. Consider your choices. Consider you haven't necessarily done a healthy thing in too long to remember. And the health nuts don't mean an apple a day will keep the doc away – but only if you aim it right.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Sugar, you've been through a lot of challenge. How much of that was your durn fault? Did you show your appreciation when somebody gave you a helping hand? Did you repay the favor? Try remembering to dance with the one who brought you to the dance and get back out there.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
It is true you got some bad blowback. It may be because a confidant of yours uses a phone like a DustBuster, just to get the dirt. Take a good look at who you trust and be sure they are worth all the fuss. Then sweep up the mess and move on, Sugar.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
Recent events have left you upside down and bassackwards. You don't know whether to scratch your watch or wind your backside. Will it help you if I tell you this is good training for you? Despite always giving the appearance you are the One in Charge, you have bluffed and someone called it. Fix it.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
Ever notice that the people who ought to be running things are either driving for Uber or giving manicures? Wisdom is going to find you in the most unlikely places. If you are wiser, you are going to keep an ear cocked for insights from people you might oughta listen to before you make that big decision.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Well, hello, Sassy Pants! You put some steel in your backbone and stood up to somebody who needed it. Pushing back may just become one of your favorite activities this year, after a long standoff. You are going to find it easier to be true to your own ideas, and don't worry if it alienates your Mama.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
Big ole changes are in the chart for you, and despite all the secret nail biting you have done, it is going to be just fine, Sugar Pie. If you only knew how many helping hands are making good things possible, you would sleep better at night. You would also sleep better if you stopped sleeping with your cell phone.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
The rumor is, you have finally broken off with the lunatic fringe and found yourself. Or was it that you found religion? Whatever you found, don't forget where you put it. You have an easy transition into the New Year, and an easy opportunity to renew some old acquaintances. They didn't forget you.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Two Gents on a Porch

Another overheard conversation at Rosehaven Assisted Living in rural North Carolina

By Clyde Edgerton

"How do you control the climate, anyway?"

"That's simple: The more you run air conditioning, the colder it gets. Air conditioning controls the climate indoors. That has an overall cooling effect out of doors too, because people used to keep their windows open and now they can't. So now the air that used to cool houses can be used to cool the climate. It's figured out with a climate formula. I think Ben Gore came up with it."

"But I keep hearing 'global warming.'"

"Very true, but air conditioning has been going on for what, over 60, 70 years. Cars heated up the air for about 50 years before air conditioning ever got started and then the climate started cooling down the Earth's surface, especially in America. Air conditioning has now cooled down the early hot effect from cars."

"But they say that temperatures are hotter than ever."

"That's because of airplanes. They started building great big airplanes with jet engines in the middle of the last century. Big engines spew out a lot of heat."

"What do the scientists say? I heard they were saying something."

"You mean 'what do weathermen say?' Those are the ones who know about how hot or cold it is. Scientists know about rocks and trees and chemicals and are usually just professors. I mean, why would you go to anybody but a weatherman to learn about the weather? It's like why would you go to anybody but a cook to learn about how to cook? Common sense stuff."

"I guess if you did away with cars and airplanes, then the air conditioning could make global cooling. Yes, common sense. Maybe we can move into an era of common sense."

"Which had you rather have? Global warming or global cooling? Since we have a choice now."

"I don't know. I don't get around much anymore, so I guess I'd rather keep air conditioning and cut back on cars and airplanes."

"You know, I remember the times before air conditioning."

"Oh, yes. Me too. It's hard to remember how we kept cool."

"You'd sweat, you'd get damp, and then the air from a fan would cool you down. Before electricity, my mama had a great big hand-held straw fan. You don't see them anymore."

"You don't see a lot of things anymore."

"Those were the good old days. No erectile dysfunction commercials."

"No commercials at all. I mean, you had commercials on the radio, maybe for Tide, but they were only every half hour or so."

"Yeah. Those were the good old days. I remember in our little house we had this big old window fan planted in a window so that it sucked air out instead of blowing it in, and on hot summer nights you'd close every window in the house except for windows beside a bed, and that window fan would pull in cool night air, gentle like, and you'd sleep in just your underwear without a sheet. You'd have that cool night air gently pulled in, keeping you nice and cool, and you're sleeping with night sounds instead of air conditioning sounds. Before morning, you'd need a sheet. I woke up more rested than I have since."

"I understand that President Trump is going to recommend opening up houses with the air conditioning on so that we can cool down global warming."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Oh yeah. It was on the news. That's what he's hearing from his advisers."

"I'm glad Trump doesn't drink like Bill Clinton did. Remember what Clinton's nose looked like?"

"You mean 'looks like.'"

"Yeah. My Uncle Pierce had a nose like that and he drank like a fish. But remember, we said we were not going to discuss politics."

"Sure. Right. But I'm not so sure letting air conditioning out of your house will stop global warming."

"But you can. I promise. Think about it. And there are all kinds of benefits. If we go that route, we burn more electricity; if we burn more electricity, we use up more coal, and that gives us more coal mining jobs, which means more coal transportation jobs, which means more jobs making soap. Presto. You kill several birds with one stone."

"Soap?"

"You handle coal, you get dirty hands."

"What about a high electricity bill from all that air conditioning?"

"That's easy. You pay for your air conditioning with the money you save on taxes. It's called the clean energy credit. Air conditioned air has all the nasty stuff conditioned out of it. It's clean. Clean energy. Come on, man."

"Oh. Oh, I see."

"The future is so bright I have to wear sunglasses."

"I never thought about it that way. I don't have any sunglasses."

"Well, you better get some."

Clyde Edgerton is the author of 10 novels, a memoir and most recently, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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